

U.S. avoids row with Israel

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The United States Friday sought to sidestep a new row with Israel over its declared plans to settle more Jews in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem. State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler was asked about a letter from Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy to Secretary of State James Baker. In the letter, Levy expressed his government's determination to press ahead with its settlement policy in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. (See page 2). The letter was described by Israeli officials as a restatement of long-standing policy, but it appeared to backtrack on an Oct. 2 letter saying the government would not settle Soviet immigrants across the 1967 "green line." Tutwiler said: "The assurance in the letter of October 2nd was negotiated with the Israeli government and have not been retracted in the letter just received. We think those assurances still stand and have not been retracted or called into question by the second letter. 'We believe that it would be counterproductive for us to continue this debate.'"

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية تليغرافية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية "الراي"

Britain 'does not oppose Palestinian state'

TUNIS (R) — Britain told the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Friday that it favoured Palestinian self-determination and did not oppose the creation of a Palestinian state, the Palestinian news agency Wafa said. British Ambassador Stephen Hill met PLO Political Department head Fawzi Kaddoumi in Tunis to deny reports in the Israeli press quoting Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd as saying he opposed creation of a Palestinian state. Wafa added, Palestinian personalities in the Israeli-occupied territories refused to meet Hurd in occupied Jerusalem Wednesday in protest against the reported statement. Britain said Hurd had been misquoted. Hill also told Kaddoumi that London was in favour of an international peace conference on the Middle East, Wafa said. They also discussed the Oct. 8 killing of Palestinians by Israelis in Jerusalem. Kaddoumi called for sanctions against Israel and that measures be taken to protect Palestinians in the occupied territories.

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Yemen unveils Gulf peace plan

SANAA (R) — Yemen has unveiled a Gulf peace plan that calls for Iraqi forces to quit Kuwait and U.S.-led forces to withdraw from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, a military newspaper said Friday. Yemen was discussing its initiative for ending the Gulf crisis with Arab and other allied countries, the newspaper said. It quoted informed sources as saying there were five other main points in the Yemeni peace plan besides a troop withdrawal by both sides. They said these included lifting the United Nations trade blockade against Iraq, granting the Kuwaiti people a right of self-determination, and work on a comprehensive settlement for all the Middle East problems. The weekly said the proposal called for an inquiry into the real causes behind the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait which should be dealt with in a "suitable and just" way, in an Arab or international framework. It also called for a new economic framework in the region to eliminate a big gap between the "rich and the poor."

Soviets won't reveal Iraq military details

CANBERRA (AP) — A Soviet Foreign Ministry official said Friday his government would not reveal to the United States details of military weapons it has supplied to Iraq. At a media conference, ministry spokesman Gennadiy Gerasimov referred to a 1972 treaty with Iraq on economic and military cooperation when asked if the Soviet Union's intelligence organisation, the KGB, could brief Washington on Iraqi military capability. He said secrecy provisions existed in relation to all Soviet arms supplies and no such information would be provided. He said he did not believe war to the Gulf was inevitable. He said other means, particularly sanctions, needed to be used to "force Baghdad to behave. You must understand it is not that easy to go to war. You will have victims and you will have catastrophic consequences for the world economy because of the price of oil going up and up and up." (The Soviet government) do have certain advantages — if you can term it advantage — in that we are on speaking terms with Saddam Hussein.

Iraq tells foreigners to register

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq has told foreigners in Kuwait to report to officials dealing with residence permits by Nov. 15. A Baghdad television announcement in Arabic and English gave no reason for the order but said people who failed to comply could face deportation. "Those who fail to show up will be liable to legal measures and the irrevocable cancellation of their residence permits," said the broadcast to non-Iraqi and non-Kuwaiti residents of "the province of Kuwait."

British warplane crashes in S. Arabia

LONDON (R) — Two British air force crewmen were injured when their Tornado GRI ground attack plane crashed on landing after a training flight in Saudi Arabia, the Defence Ministry said Friday. It was the first British warplane to crash in the Gulf since Britain sent forces there after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait Aug. 2. Britain now has more than 50 warplanes in the region. Last week the United States air force grounded all training flights in the Gulf for 24 hours for a safety study after about 20 accidents involving warplanes and helicopters in which more than 30 people were killed.

Hostages reportedly moved to Bekaa

BEIRUT (AP) — American and British hostages held by pro-Iranian extremists were taken out of Beirut's southern slums to east Lebanon's Bekaa Valley last week, Lebanese military intelligence sources said Friday. The transfer preceded the joint attack by government troops and the Syrian army that crushed Michel Aoun's rebellion in the Christian heartland of Beirut Saturday.

Moscow pursuing peaceful solution in Gulf — Primakov

Combined agency dispatches

WASHINGTON — The Soviet Union is exerting maximum efforts to resolve the Gulf crisis through peaceful means, a senior Soviet envoy said Friday.

Yevgeny Primakov, a special advisor to President Mikhail Gorbachev, told reporters after meeting with President George Bush: "I cannot say that I have brought specific or convoluted or detailed ideas. But at the same time, we, the Soviet Union, are trying to do our utmost to attain the objectives that were set to the U.N. resolutions through peaceful means."

A report in the Washington Times, meanwhile, said Gorbachev had sent a peace plan with Primakov for Bush. The newspaper, quoting unidentified U.S. officials in Moscow, said the plan calls for free elections to Kuwait and cash compensation for oil sales Iraq claims to have lost as a

result of overproduction.

In return, Iraq reportedly is willing to reverse Iraq's military occupation.

While Primakov visited Washington, U.S. Defence Secretary Dick Cheney was in Moscow calling on the Kremlin's top military and foreign policy officials. Cheney has met with Gorbachev, Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and Defence Minister Dimitri Yazov.

Primakov said Thursday after a meeting with Secretary of State James Baker that while Iraq should not profit from its invasion of Kuwait, military action against Baghdad should be avoided.

At a news conference earlier this week, Baker said Iraq had recently indicated tentative interest in a vague compromise settlement that might involve the withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait if Baghdad were allowed

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Ramadan: Europe, Arabs envision negotiated solution

AMMAN (J.T.) — Iraqi First Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yassin Ramadan has said that a "process of negotiations" may be in the offing to reach a solution to the Gulf crisis.

He said the Gulf crisis has entered the "phase of reassessment and reconsideration of positions," during a brief visit here Thursday. "This makes us hope that the few coming days will intensify contacts and deepen talks aiming at ending the crisis," Ramadan said in an arrival statement.

"Many world countries... have started to feel the dangers of the crisis and the catastrophe which America is trying to drag them into," he said.

"There is an intention to find a peaceful solution in the Gulf as it is envisioned by European and Arab countries."

Ramadan held two hours of talks with Prime Minister Mudar Badran at Amman airport, and then left immediately for Baghdad.

Thursday's visit was Ramadan's second in less than two weeks and the third since Iraq's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

Earlier this month, Ramadan visited Amman prior to a tour to North African countries, where he delivered messages from Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"We have made important progress," Ramadan said Thursday, referring to his talks with the leaders of Sudan, Tunisia and Morocco, Libya and Algeria.

"This was achieved during exchanges of views on the crisis and discussions on the joint efforts exerted to find means of coordinating our stands in the future," he said.

U.N. ponders massacre probe

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies)

Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar was to give the Security Council a private briefing late Friday on his delayed efforts to send a mission to probe the killing of Palestinians by Israelis in occupied Jerusalem last week.

A U.N. spokesman declined to say whether the secretary general would press ahead with the mission, despite Israel's refusal to cooperate.

An informed source said Israel offered to provide a copy of the report of its own inquiry into the

incident, due to be completed shortly, but still refused to receive the proposed U.N. team.

The U.N. chief called to Israeli Ambassador Johanan Belo Thursday.

Bein told reporters: "We agreed that we will cooperate in trying to find ways and means to facilitate the secretary general to write his report and present it."

But he declined to answer questions about the U.N. mission, whose findings are to be presented to the Security Council before the end of the month.

The probe is linked to a resolution adopted by the Security Council a week ago condemning the Oct. 8 massacre.

The Israeli cabinet rejected the resolution as biased, opposed any U.N. interference in what it considers its "undivided capital," and said it would not cooperate.

Most members of the Security Council were reported to have urged the secretary general earlier this week to go ahead with his mission, even without Israeli

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Over 100 wounded in clashes with soldiers

Israelis prevent Palestinians from attending Aqsa prayers

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Police clashed Friday with Palestinians who were blocked for a second consecutive week from attending prayer services on Jerusalem's Al Aqsa Mosque where at least 30 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces on Oct. 8.

In a sermon in the Al Aqsa Mosque, preacher Mohammad Hussein complained that the Israeli occupation authorities were interfering with religious freedom and called it "an action of hate."

"I say to the occupation authorities that you are preventing worshippers from getting into the house of God. This is not in the religion of Moses or Jesus," he said.

In the West Bank city of Nablus, Khadejeh Mograbi, a woman in her sixties, died when soldiers fired tear-gas into her house as she tried to prevent them from arresting her four sons.

Police used water cannons to disperse hundreds of Palestinians who refused to leave after they

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Report of Aoun troops massacre kicks up furor

Hrawi sets militia deadline

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's government launched a campaign Friday to dissolve the feuding militia groups that tore the country apart in 15 years of civil war.

Government officials told Reuters Lebanon's seven armed militias, estimated to number 40,000 men, would be disbanded and disarmed within six months.

Their weapons would be handed over to the Lebanese army, they added.

Official sources said they expected the government to move next into Beirut's southern suburbs, the stronghold of militants and of kidnap groups holding 12 Western hostages.

President Elias Hrawi seeks an equitable sharing of political power among Muslims and Christians.

But he faces a daunting task in disbanding private religious and political armies in his drive to

reunite the country after toppling his foe, Christian General Michel Aoun.

Aoun's family was allowed to leave for France Friday, but Aoun himself, ousted in a ferocious battle Saturday, remained a fugitive in the French embassy. Lebanon wants to put him on trial as a war criminal.

Official sources said "the doors

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Baghdad announces rationing of petrol

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq said Friday it was introducing petrol rationing, acknowledging for the first time that the U.N. trade blockade over its invasion of Kuwait was hitting the economy.

Oil Minister Issam Abdul Rahim Al Chalabi told a news conference rationing would start Tuesday. He also disclosed that oil production had fallen to 350,000 to 400,000 barrels a day.

"The only reason behind this is to ensure that we will have enough of the additives and chemicals required to make these products for as long as possible," Chalabi said.

Iraq, with the world's second largest proven oil reserves, exported 2.8 million barrels per day of crude and refined oil products before the U.N. Security Council imposed sanctions on Aug. 6.

Chalabi said Baghdad was not tapping oil resources in Kuwait, annexed after the Aug. 2 invasion and declared Iraq's 19th pro-

vince. He declined to say how long Iraq could continue to refine petrol and lubricating oil and would not discuss the implications for its one million-man army, nearly half of which is deployed in or near Kuwait.

"These things have been taken into consideration and we will have to ensure that we supply the army's requirements," he said.

The U.N. embargo, imposed to try to force President Saddam Hussein to withdraw his troops from Kuwait, has stopped all Iraqi oil exports except for a small amount to Jordan and cut off its imports.

Shortages of high-octane petrol were noticed in provincial Iraq last week. Long queues of cars formed at petrol stations in Baghdad Friday after rationing was announced.

Iraq introduced food rationing.

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Soviet legislature approves Gorbachev economy plan

MOSCOW (AP) — The Soviet legislature gave preliminary approval Friday to President Mikhail Gorbachev's embattled economic reform plan.

Shortly before the vote, Gorbachev accused his key rival of shirking responsibility for the difficult transformation to a free market system.

The Supreme Soviet voted 350-12 in favour of the plan, with 26 abstentions, and began debating possible amendments.

Gorbachev called his programme "the only rational course of action" in urging its passage.

In a 50-minute, low-key speech, Gorbachev also dismissed concerns that the switch from a centrally planned system was a retreat from socialism.

His rival, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, has lambasted Gorbachev's programme as a "catastrophe" that is "doomed to fail" within months after touching off inflation and unemployment.

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Jordan's economy will collapse in 1991 without aid, U.N. envoy reports

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies)

— Jordan's economy, crippled as a side effect of the international sanctions against Iraq, will collapse next year if other countries do not aid the Kingdom, according to a U.N. expert just back from Amman.

"It's a particularly heavy blow for a country which was already recovering from a financial crisis," Jean Ripert said Thursday after returning from Jordan.

Ripert went to Jordan as a special emissary of U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar to assess Jordan's problems resulting from the economic embargo on Iraq.

Jordan, he said, will lose about \$1 billion between Aug. 2, when Iraq invaded Kuwait, and the end

of this year because of the trade embargo on Baghdad, its major trading partner.

But in terms of the proportion of Jordan's gross national product lost due to the embargo, he said, the picture is far worse.

"For Jordan, in 1990 it is a figure around 30 per cent. For next year, it could be something above 50 per cent," he said.

"They are drawing on very, very limited reserves. The question is, will Jordan be able to survive," Ripert said.

When asked how much Jordan might lose in total in 1991, Ripert replied:

"We don't believe that it would be very meaningful to extrapolate. Something has to happen. Such a country will not survive

unless something happens in the region," he said.

Ripert said it is true that Jordan is receiving oil from Iraq, but said its economy would collapse without that fuel.

Jordan is not paying for the oil, but crediting it against Iraq's debt to Jordan at a rate of \$16 per barrel, far below the current market price.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker told Congress Thursday that both the Iranian and Jordanian governments seem to be honouring the U.N. sanctions against Iraq. "We believe the Iranian government when it says it is going to observe the sanctions... And we believe the

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Arab League condemns Israeli massacre after wrangle in Tunis

TUNIS (Agencies) — The Arab League has condemned Israel over last week's killing of Palestinians in Arab Jerusalem but compromised on criticism of the United States.

The resolution was passed Thursday night after moderates and hardliners patched up a split that mirrored the Arab World's division into two hostile camps over Iraq's takeover of Kuwait.

The Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) led a walkout when foreign ministers and delegates voted 11-10 against a draft accusing Washington of bias in favour of "Israel's policy of repression and terror."

"I congratulate you on your friendship with America," Farouk Kaddoumi, the PLO's foreign affairs chief, told the majority scornfully as he left. Ministers from Iraq, Sudan and

Yemen followed.

North African delegations talked them into returning. The final resolution, approved unanimously, urged the United States to "change its policy to favour the national rights of Palestinians and Arabs and stop aid to Israel."

It condemned the Oct. 8 bloodbath in Jerusalem as a "new aggression against the (Al Aqsa) Mosque of Jerusalem and the Dome of the Rock" and called for United Nations sanctions against Israel for its refusal to submit to U.N. resolutions.

The Arab League majority — Egypt, Syria and the Gulf states — strongly oppose Iraq's August 2 invasion of Kuwait.

The PLO has refused to condemn it. Others are against the U.S.-led military build-up in the Gulf or sympathise with Iraq's efforts to link the crisis to the

Arab-Israel conflict.

The Tunis meeting was the league's best-attended session since the Gulf crisis began, although most of the pro-Kuwait camp sent only ambassador-rank delegations.

The Jerusalem massacre threatened to drive a wedge into the broad alliance which the United States has formed against Iraq. Washington's stance, supporting a United Nations probe which Israel has refused to receive, angered Israeli leaders as well as the Arabs.

Delegation sources said that the six Gulf states and Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Djibouti and Somali voted against an earlier resolution tabled by the PLO.

The PLO, which earlier this year held talks in Tunis with the

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Saudis step up pressure with curbs on Aqaba-bound cargo

By P.V. Virekanand

Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Saudi Arabia has introduced a series of unprecedented measures clearly designed to step up pressure on Jordan through restricting the flow of seafreight, and unless the situation is redressed soon Jordanian industries will face major problems, according to senior government and shipping officials.

The Saudi measures, which have resulted in transshipments destined for Jordan piled up at Jeddah in the Red Sea over the past two weeks, follow Riyadh's expulsion of Jordanian diplomats, cut-off of oil supplies to Jordan, suspension

of import of Jordanian agricultural produce, and tightening regulations for Jordanian expatriates living in Saudi Arabia.

In addition to the piling up of over 200 containers destined for Jordan at Jeddah, a "new Saudi trend that has surfaced in the last 48 hours is making it difficult for ships to sail to Aqaba from Saudi ports to pick up Jordanian exports of phosphates," Tawfiq Kawar, president of the Jordanian Shipping Agents Association, said Friday.

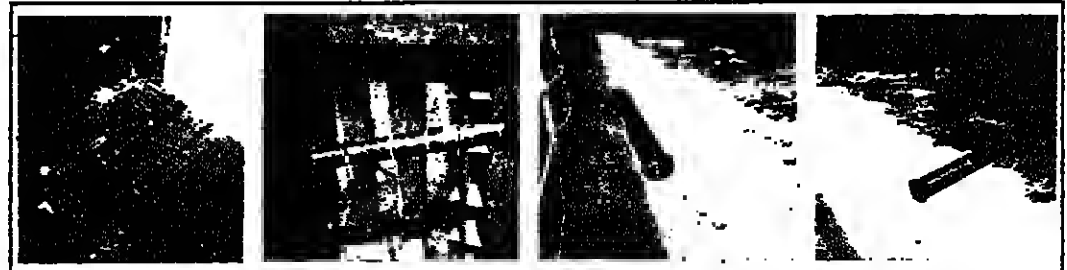
Kawar said an Indian ship, Mangal Desai, which docked at Jeddah on Oct. 17, was not given permission to set sail for Aqaba to load Jordanian phos-

phates and the captain of the vessel had to resort to "pretences" before leaving the Saudi port and head towards Aqaba. "This is very serious," Kawar told the Jordan Times.

"As it is the situation is very difficult, and now it appears that they (the Saudis) also want to block Jordanian exports," he said.

Kawar said that about 200 Jordan-bound containers with general cargo were held up at Jeddah and the Saudi port authorities are refusing repeated efforts by Jordanian shipping agents to pick these up. The containers were unloaded at the Saudi port by ships which

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Photos taken by crew show crates of steel pipes open and pipes dumped into the sea

U.S. navy said to have dumped Jordan-bound steel pipes into sea

By Caroline Faraj

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — American warships recently intercepted a Cypriot ship heading for Aqaba and dumped part of its cargo into the sea, informed sources said.

The ship, carrying goods from the Far East to Jordan and Iraq, had discharged goods bound for Iraq at Hudaydah port in Yemen under the supervision of U.S. navy, which gave the captain a certificate to the effect that the goods destined for Iraq were seized, according to the sources.

The ship then headed towards Aqaba and while near the Saudi port of Jeddah it was intercepted by U.S. warships, which gave it the go-ahead sign because it was found out that it did not carry anything violating the sanctions, the sources

said.

While passing near the Tiran Straits, an American destroyer — bearing number 34 on its hull — stopped it on Sept. 11, and an American navy officer went aboard, searched it, examined the cargo and checked it against the log book, the sources said.

After the search, the officer reported that the cargo does not conform with the manifest although he was presented with a certificate that the goods bound for Iraq were discharged at Hudaydah.

The officer did not listen to the argument and ordered a cargo of steel pipes dumped overboard.

The order was carried out. To waive their responsibility for what happened to the cargo, the ship's crew recorded all the events and took photos of the dumping of the cargo into the sea, the sources

said. The U.S. embassy in Amman said it was not aware of any such incident. In a written statement, the embassy quoted the U.S. Central Command in Saudi Arabia as saying: "There is no U.S. navy ship operating in the Gulf area with hull number 34. There has never been an instance of U.S. navy personnel boarding a ship and dumping cargo. We are not aware of any similar actions by other navies supporting the interception programme. Such an action is contrary to established guidelines and is not permitted."

The statement added that the U.S. policy permits merchant ships bound for a non-prohibited port to be diverted if the boarding party finds discrepancies between the statements of ship's master, licensing, registration, log information, cargo manifest, and its actual cargo.

Israel seeks to block moves to foil Saudi arms deal

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Israeli government and its influential lobby find themselves in an awkward position: They oppose a move by a number of pro-Israeli senators to block a \$7.5 billion arms sale to Saudi Arabia.

The senators, led by Alan Cranston and Bob Packwood, submitted a resolution opposing the sale hours after leaders of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) urged them to back off, said sources familiar with the affair.

"This is the first time that pro-Israel forces have ever tried to block opposition to a major arms sale to one of Israel's enemies," said one Capitol Hill source.

The administration last month notified Congress that it plans to sell the Saudis \$7.5 billion in tanks, anti-tank missiles, rocket launchers, helicopter gunships and other weapons deemed necessary to block an attack from Iraq. If Congress doesn't oppose the deal by Oct. 27, it goes into effect.

The administration is banking on support for its anti-Iraq policy to push the sale through Congress, where pro-Israel lawmakers probably would have balked at the unprecedented sale to an Arab state.

The State Department reasoned that lawmakers would be unpopular with their constituents if they opposed selling weapons to a country where more than 150,000 American troops are deployed.

Israel and its lobbyists in Washington have objected — often successfully — to every major Saudi arms sale in the past decade, building an almost legendary reputation of influence in the process.

But AIPAC, bowing to reality, decided to hold its fire until the administration presents to Congress a second package for the Saudis next January, sources said.

That proposal, estimated at over \$10 billion, is expected to include the most advanced F-15 jet fighters and is of significantly greater concern to Israel and its supporters than the largely land-based arsenal being proposed now.

The lobby's strategy to withhold opposition to the first sale also drew out of concern about jeopardizing various proposals in the House and Senate to help Israel get millions of dollars in emergency weapons against a perceived Iraqi threat.

A delegation of Jewish leaders went to Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney last month and promised him it would not oppose the current sale. Similar assurances were given by AIPAC to the State Department's policy planner, Dennis Ross. And one of the Jewish community's top leaders, Max Fisher, paid a call on President Bush and offered his support, too.

Imagine, then, the administration's surprise when it discovered last week a well-advanced plan by a group of senators to oppose large portions of the Saudi sale.

But when Ross called AIPAC Director Tom Dine to complain, he was in for an even bigger surprise. AIPAC, which has been credited by critics and supporters alike for having vast pull in Congress, didn't know about the lawmakers' plan.

Israel tells U.S. of plans to settle Jews

TEL AVIV (R) — Foreign Minister David Levy has told the United States that Israel would press ahead with settling Jews in the occupied territories, including East Jerusalem.

His message to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker was described by Israeli officials as long-standing policy, but it appeared to backtrack on an Oct. 2 letter saying the government would not settle Soviet immigrants across the 1967 "green line."

The latest disclosure appeared certain to intensify Arab protests over Israel's settlement policies bringing in thousands of Soviet Jews. It coincided with a Damascus announcement that Arab League states will blacklist transport firms taking Jewish settlers to Israel and the occupied territories.

Levy wrote: "You are well aware that in the (earlier) letter there is no undertaking, either direct or indirect, to refrain from construction within Jerusalem or anywhere else, including Judea, Samaria (the West Bank) and Gaza."

He had come under intense criticism from domestic critics who said his earlier letter to

Baker weakened Israel's claim to Arab Jerusalem and threatened its plan to settle areas occupied in 1967.

Levy's previous letter had helped win Washington's agreement to guarantee repayment of \$400 million in commercial loans that Israel will use to build housing for the Soviet Jews flooding into the country.

The new letter, widely publicized in the Israeli media and also shown to Reuters, was to be delivered to Baker Thursday by the Israeli ambassador in Washington. It said U.S. aid would not be used beyond the "green line" but did not mention limits on settlement of Soviet Jews.

The domestic attacks had focused both on Levy's reference to the "green line" and his guarantee to provide Baker with regular reports on Israeli settlement activity.

After Levy's earlier letter stated "Israel's policy is not to direct or settle Soviet Jews beyond the green line," the government announced plans last Sunday to build 15,000 more apartments for immigrants in Arab Jerusalem.

Opponents of Gulf role mobilise in America

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts (AP) — A diverse coalition of Americans is taking to the airwaves, handing out leaflets and holding teach-ins in an effort to awaken opposition to U.S. intervention in the Middle East.

A round of protests began Thursday at Harvard University, where students and faculty held teach-ins reminiscent of the Vietnam era. The events continue through Saturday, when rallies are planned in at least 15 cities.

Television ads opposing U.S. intervention and starring Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic aired for the first time Thursday, and support was widening for a Marine corporal facing court-martial in Honolulu after he refused to go to Saudi Arabia with his unit.

"The response we've been getting is tremendous, versus how long it took to build up opposition to the Vietnam war," said Charles Twist, spokesman for the New York Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention in the Middle East.

This time, though, the coalition members range from veterans groups and labor unions to disabled people and environmentalists. Groups representing the homeless and the elderly also are involved. A protest march on Saturday in New York City will begin in Harlem.

"It's a big step forward from the '60s when the majority of the anti-war movement was mostly white and mostly students," Twist said.

Organizers credit this apparent broad appeal not only to concerns about the morality of sending soldiers to the Middle East, but also to the cost.

"The front pages are full of the budget crisis," Twist said. "It doesn't take much to make the connection that we're spending billions to keep our troops there at the same time we're cutting social security" for the elderly and disabled.

Anti-intervention leaders, who complain they have been virtually ignored by mainstream media, said the word is being spread.

"There's been very little negative response and not a lot of leaflets end up on the ground," said Phebe Eckfeldt, spokeswoman for the New England Coalition to Stop U.S. Intervention.

in the Middle East. Veterans' groups have been particularly active in the opposition.

"The days of U.S. veterans blindly supporting their government are over since Vietnam," said Winston Warfield, president of the 400-member Smedley D. Butler Brigade of Veterans for Peace. "U.S. soldiers are being asked to pay the ultimate price in a war for oil and to protect the grotesque profits of multinational oil interests."

Kovic, author of "Born on the Fourth of July," also made into a film starring Tom Cruise, appears in a 30-second television spot, funded by money raised from veterans and peace groups. In it, he says U.S. troops are risking their lives "not to defend democracy, but to protect the big oil companies." Kovic is scheduled to address a Los Angeles rally Saturday.

Labor unions also have been drawn to the protests.

"You've got inflation, budget cuts, joblessness, and now the war," said Nan Genger, an organizer for a United Auto Workers local that is co-sponsoring the rally scheduled for Boston.

"Working people are under attack."

There also are events planned Saturday supporting U.S. forces in the Middle East.

In Atlanta, where protesters plan to gather at a downtown military induction centre Saturday, families of soldiers stationed in the Gulf have scheduled a counter-demonstration.

And in Savannah, Georgia, residents will bake and air-fry 120,000 brownies to the 24th infantry division now in Saudi Arabia.

The U.S. government began sending troops to the Middle East shortly after Iraq's Aug. 2 takeover of Kuwait. There are now more than 200,000 troops from the United States and other countries in the Gulf region.

A recent Washington Post-ABC news poll showed 60 per cent of people questioned believe the United States should keep troops in the region until Iraq withdraws from Kuwait. Five weeks ago, the figure was 75 per cent.

Rafsanjani keeps options open by resuming Iraq ties

NICOSIA, (AP) — Iran, whose moderate government is fighting hardliner opposition to better ties with the West, has indicated it was accelerating its return to friendly relations with Iraq.

Iran said it will reopen its Baghdad embassy, swap all remaining POWs with its former Gulf war foe, and send Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati to visit the Iraqi capital.

The normalisation of ties with Iraq is born of Tehran's need to neutralise a powerful enemy and keep its options open in the fluid Gulf crisis which erupted after Baghdad's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait.

For more than a decade, Iran found itself isolated and boxed into a corner because of Arab World fears it was trying to export Islamic fundamentalism and destabilise conservative governments.

Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani is determined to land on his feet, no matter what the outcome of the Gulf confrontation.

He wants to end his country's isolation, and rebuild ties with the West and his Arab neighbours.

To demonstrate Iran's leverage in the crisis, Tehran has hinted it may send food and other essential to Iraq, despite a U.N.-imposed economic embargo aimed at forcing an Iraqi withdrawal from Kuwait.

Iran has officially condemned the invasion of Kuwait and said it would comply with the sanctions.

But the indications that it might assist Iraq in poking a hole in the embargo has caused consternation in Arab capitals aligned with the United States and other Western nations against Iraq.

By resuming relations with Iraq, Tehran is also catering to those anti-Western Muslim fundamentalists in the region who are calling for the formation of a pan-Islamic front with Baghdad against the United States.

As part of that same policy, Rafsanjani is also placating radical opponents at home, who consider the United States the greatest enemy of the Islamic Republic.

Those radical opponents are aghast at the presence of Western troops in Saudi Arabia, site of Islam's two holiest shrines, and want Rafsanjani to back Iraq in confronting Washington.

Noting Iran's need to use its leverage in the crisis, the English-language Tehran Times justified the improvement in relations with Iraq by arguing that since a "political settlement of the Persian Gulf crisis" is unlikely to succeed without Iranian help, Iran should have a vital presence in the capitals of the Persian Gulf countries.

Abul Qassem Shashale, the Iranian chargé d'affaires in Baghdad who will preside over the Saturday embassy opening, told the Associated Press Thursday that Velayati will visit Baghdad soon after.

He added that "I and my com-

panions are really very pleased to be here among our brothers."

Shashale's announcement coincided with a report on Tehran Radio that Iran and Iraq will resume a prisoner of war exchange next week, after a month-long swap was suspended in mid-September without any official explanation from either side.

The report monitored in Nicosia quoted Manouchehr Mottaki, deputy for international affairs at the Iranian Foreign Ministry, as saying more than 230 Iranian POWs will return home next week.

Both sides abruptly halted the exchange begun Aug. 17, during which some 75,000 prisoners on both sides were repatriated.

Sources said Iraq had claimed all the Iranian prisoners had been sent home, except those serving jail terms for crimes they committed as POWs.

But the International Committee of the Red Cross, which coordinated the swaps, estimates some 25,000 prisoners remain stranded on both sides.

Middle East analysts believe Iraq halted the swap to speed up the normalisation of ties.

They add that renewed ties with Iraq is a diplomatic coup for Baghdad.

The Tehran Times said Thursday that Iran had appointed Mohammad Kazem Khonsari, former ambassador to Libya, as its new ambassador to Iraq.

The paper said Khonsari would leave for Baghdad in a few days.

Ozal ends Syria visit

DAMASCUS (AP) — Turkish President Turgut Ozal left Syria Thursday after a two-day visit, winding up his tour of five Arab countries that included extensive discussions on the Gulf crisis.

Ozal met earlier in the day with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad for talks dominated by Iraq, with which both Turkey and Syria share borders. The two leaders also discussed the overall situation in the Middle East and bilateral issues, but no details were immediately available, according to the Syrian news agency (SANA).

Diplomats said Ozal, who is the first Turkish president ever to visit Syria, explained to the Arab leaders he met Turkey's position on the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait as well as economic and other repercussions of the crisis on the Middle East region.

Ozal also visited Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Turkey and Syria have called for Iraq's unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait and the restoration of the Kuwaiti emiri government.

The two leaders were also believed to have discussed two-way cooperation, as they share a 1,000-kilometre border.

Ozal is the seventh president of Turkey since it became a republic in 1923, but none have visited Syria, which like most of the rest of the Middle East was once part of the Ottoman empire.

In 1987 Ozal became the first Turkish premier to visit Damascus. Foreign ministry officials from the two countries have exchanged official visits recently.

On Wednesday, officials in Ankara announced that the Syrian government agreed to pay \$3.4 million in compensation for the downing of a private Turkish airplane by Syrian warplanes last year near the border, killing five.

Congress backs Bush's past actions, questions future

WASHINGTON (AP) — Members of Congress still back President George Bush's actions in the Gulf, but both Democrats and Republicans are questioning what his administration might do next with 200,000 soldiers in the Mideast.

Senators and representatives on key committees dealing with foreign affairs praised, grilled and lectured Secretary of State James Baker for a total of five hours Wednesday and Thursday.

Baker rejected appeals from several members that he commit to getting congressional approval for any military action against Iraq.

"I really think it would be self-defeating... if Congress was called back into session and we had days of debate about what we

should or should not do," Baker said.

Congressman Dante Fascell, Democratic chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, joined calls from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee for a group to be set during the upcoming congressional recess to consult with the Republican president over the Gulf crisis.

"The president's use of force must be carried out in the context of a declaration of war or other congressional authorisation," Fascell said.

Baker rejected the idea of setting up a special congressional group on the Gulf but said the administration would continue to consult with regular congressional leaders.

Israeli police announce capture of bike bandit

TEL AVIV (AP) — Police have captured Israel's mysterious "bikerband" bandit when he attempted to rob his 23rd bank.

As an indication of how badly police had wanted the man, Police Minister Roni Milo went on national radio to announce the arrest.

"According to the present information, I do not think there can be doubts regarding the suspect," Milo said.

The suspect, an Israeli in his 30s, has spotted in the Tel Aviv suburb of Ramat Gan after parking his red and black motorcycle at a back entrance of a Bank Leumi branch.

He reportedly fled without entering the bank when he spotted a police car.

But a police team already had blocked off the area. The pursuit, which included police firing and backup from a helicopter, lasted for seven and a half minutes,

police said.

"We were very close to the area, heard reports on the radio and noticed a bike rider who fled on a small road," police officer Shlomo Braunstein told a news conference in Tel Aviv.

"I was directed into the courtyard where the suspect was and stopped him. Afterwards we continued searches and found the suspect's bike and the pistol," Braunstein said.

The bandit — nicknamed "bikerband" or "ofonabank" in Hebrew — robbed 22 banks in a dozen towns over the past 22 months.

He became a local hero because of his ability to elude police. Israel Television did prime-time reports on his exploits, and the daily Hadashot newspaper ran a series of articles trying to pierce his mysterious ways. There were even T-shirts that said "bikerband."

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Meditators aim to ease Gulf crisis

FAIRFIELD, Iowa (R) — About 4,000 transcendental meditators assembled in this town surrounded by cornfields are nearing the end of a week-long effort to ease tensions in the Gulf through the power of positive thought waves. "We feel we've been getting good results," a spokeswoman for Maharishi International University said Thursday. The effort will come to an end Sunday but "we're inviting anyone who wants to, to stay for a few more days. When you turn a light off darkness just floods back into the room," said the spokeswoman. "We don't want a quick rise in negativity, we want a dimming effect." Practitioners of a form of transcendental meditation called "sidhi" are attempting to spread positive energy into the Gulf region to influence the course of events. They believe that a small fraction of the population can influence things if they concentrate their efforts together. Keith Wallace, a researcher at the university, said the effort will be measured later by doing a content analysis of newspapers published during the time the meditation was in progress. The university was founded by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

Japan withdraws Iraq invitation

TOKYO (AP) — Japan has withdrawn Iraq's invitation to send a delegate to Emperor Akihito's enthronement, which will include dignitaries from more than 150 other countries, the Foreign Ministry said Friday. "In light of the invasion and annexation of Kuwait, the invitation to Iraq has been withdrawn," spokesman Taizo Watanabe told reporters. Iraq's ambassador to Japan was informed of the decision Thursday and "expressed regret," Watanabe said. Baghdad had accepted the invitation but had not specified which official would attend the Nov. 12 ceremony, he added.

Bangladesh seeks EC help

BRUSSELS (R) — Bangladeshi President Hossain Ershad asked for European Community (EC) help Thursday to weather the Gulf crisis, but EC Commissioner Abel Matutes said the EC would only act as part of a broad international effort. "Matutes said the (EC's Executive) Commission was looking at the situation, but that it wanted to act in the context of an international effort," an EC spokesman said. "We have neither the resources nor the responsibility to take everything on our shoulders. There are institutions better equipped than we are to do this," the spokesman added.

Italian couple detained in Iraq marry

BAGHDAD (AP) — A Sicilian man held hostage by the Iraqi government was married Thursday after the government gave him a fiancée a visa to come to Baghdad. "This is fantastic," groom Paolo Carpio, 32, told reporters after his wedding at a hotel here. Government officials and friends from Italy clapped, and in keeping with Italian tradition, threw rice — a symbol of fertility — at the newlywed couple. Carpio is one of 325 Italians who have been detained in Iraq since Baghdad's Aug. 2 invasion of Kuwait. "I was in love for the past 16 years but I could never imagine I would get married here," his bride, 30-year-old Maria Colosa, also from Sicily, told reporters. Colosa flew into Baghdad on Thursday after the Iraqi government gave her a visa and said it had no objection to their marriage being performed in Baghdad. Carpio has been working as an electrical engineer in the port city of Basra for the past 18 months.

Turkish author to pay damages to Ozals

ISTANBUL (R) — The author of the book about Turkish President Turgut Ozal was ordered by a court Thursday to pay \$9 million lira (\$29,000) damages to the Ozal family. The semi-official Anatolian news agency said an Ankara court ordered Emin Colasan to pay the damages for defamation in his book, "Where did Turgut Spring From," the first in Turkey on the past of the Ozal family. The same Ankara court ordered the mass-circulation daily Bugun to stop publication of extracts of the book in April 1989 when the court case had begun.

Poisonous mushrooms kill 9 in Turkey

ANKARA (R) — Four children and five adults have died and 36 people are in hospital after eating poisonous mushrooms, Turkey's state radio said Friday. Autumn rains have pushed up fields of mushrooms in rural areas around Istanbul and doctors have warned people against picking the wrong variety. At least 25 Turks died after eating poisonous mushrooms last year.

Firefighter may be headed to Gulf

HOUSTON (R) — Legendary oil firefighter Paul "Red" Adair may be headed to the volatile Gulf to stand by in case Iraq attacks the region's vast oil wells, industry sources said. A spokesman for Houston-based Red Adair Co. told Reuters preliminary discussions have taken place between U.S. government officials, company representatives and members of Kuwait's toppled regime. "There has been some discussion but so far it has only been talk," the spokesman said. "No money has changed hands and no equipment is moving." The spokesman said Red Adair is currently in Houston and has not yet been asked to go to the Middle East. "If they wanted us to, we can get (our equipment) there just as fast as our government and their government let us," the spokesman said.

Garrison in Afghan town besieged

KABUL (R) — Mujahideen guerrillas Friday stepped up pressure on Qalat, the capital of Afghanistan's southern Zabul province. Reports from the area said the fort of Qalat was surrounded by thousands of Mujahideen guerrillas, who said the provincial capital would be in their control within two or three days. Military sources said about 200 government troops, food and medical supplies were flown to Qalat as reinforcements. Zabul province borders Pakistan, from where the rebels can supply their positions. Most of the countryside is under rebel control.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 77111-19

PROGRAMME ONE	
12:30	Koranic Programme
13:00	Children's programme
13:30	Educational programme
14:00	News Summary
14:30	Local programme
15:00	Programme review
15:30	News in Arabic
16:00	Arabic series
16:30	Local programme
17:00	News in Arabic
17:30	Arabic play
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	Les clés de fort Boyard
18:30	News in French
19:15	Anjoued 'Hini en France
20:00	News in Arabic
21:00	Encore
21:30	Feature film: "The Last Glory of Troy"
22:00	News in English
22:30	Continuation of the film

PRAYER TIMES

06:21	Fajr
05:30	(Sunrise) Duha
11:30	Dhuhr
14:32	'Asr
17:43	Maghrib
18:20	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetketh, Tel. 810740	Assembly of God Church, Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	Terrace Church Tel. 623666
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771531	Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	Armenian International Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295	The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 651817, 654932

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

The country will remain under the effect of the unstable weather conditions. Thus it will be partly cloudy and there will be a chance for scattered

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

showers of rain, especially in desert areas. Winds will be southeasterly moderate.

Min./max. temp.	
Amman	16 / 29
Aqaba	23 / 33
Deserts	17 / 28
Jordan Valley	23 / 35

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 28, Aqaba 32. Humidity readings: Amman 33 per cent, Aqaba 40 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Amin Abdul Jabbar	614222
Dr. Hani Hadadin	777751
Dr. Youssef Raheed	896301
Dr. Abdul Hadi Teyem	629115
First pharmacy	661172
Fendows pharmacy	778536
Al Azzam pharmacy	637055
Nasrallah pharmacy	623672
Al Salim pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shamsi pharmacy	637660

DRUGS:

Dr. Adel Hattamleh	(—)
Al Shams pharmacy	(985238)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Yahya Al Tarifi	(—)
Khalil pharmacy	985417

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	630341
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	893930
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	603800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	661176
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	787111
Telephone Information	661176
(directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	661176

Repairs:

Jordan Television	773111	Z
Radio Jordan	774111	h
Water Authority	680100	PR
Jordan Electricity Authority ...	815615	h
Electric Power		G
Company	636381	h
RTTC Telephone	08-53200	

Jordan Times

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Portentous silence

THE FRENCH call on the U.N. secretary general to investigate the alleged atrocities committed against followers of ousted General Michel Aoun last week is a healthy departure from the easy use of double standards that Washington and London have been practising in the Middle East and the Gulf region lately. As President George Bush and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher have raised the issue of crimes against humanity allegedly committed by Iraqi forces in Kuwait, Paris, by making its call to the U.N., is in effect saying that all such crimes committed in this area should be likewise investigated and the accused prosecuted before an international tribunal similar to the one created in the aftermath of World War II. Both London and Washington are ominously silent in the face of the French demand that the crimes against humanity in Lebanon be also investigated. As a matter of fact, both capitals are embarrassed by the recent events in Lebanon and Jerusalem and see them as undermining their arguments against Iraq. In this vein, since the issue of double standards is being put on the table and France especially is seeking to rectify the justified fear that hypocrisy dominates Washington's and London's posture in the Gulf and Middle East regions, it would be only fair to also argue with the call by London and Washington for financial and economic reparations against Baghdad. It will be recalled that President Bush and Prime Minister Thatcher have recently spearheaded an effort through the U.N. Security Council to demand damages and reparations from Iraq allegedly connected with its invasion of Kuwait. Not it is the Arab turn to resort to such precedents being established by Bush and Thatcher to call on the Security Council to demand reparations from Israel for its twenty-three-year-old occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip including East Jerusalem and to afford individuals affected by the occupation to demand compensations for any damages that they may have sustained from it.

We would like to hear the reaction of Washington and London to the demand for equal treatment by the two great democracies which have made it their preoccupation to fight for morality and justice in this part of the world. Secondly, even if Britain and the U.S. have decided to drop their call for the establishment of a Nuremberg type of international tribunal to prosecute the Iraqi president and his assistants and officers for their actions in Kuwait, the Arab side should pick up where these two countries have left off and insist that such an international tribunal be created as a matter of high priority and be given a mandate to investigate all crimes against humanity and war crimes that may have been committed in the Middle East and Gulf regions. To be sure, every area of the world should be accorded such a tribunal in order to ensure fairness and objectivity in trying to achieve the noble aims of human rights.

But as the crisis drags on, it becomes more apparent why and why is standing obstacle to making progress on solving all outstanding problems in this region. The French president is certainly not one of them. Nor can Mr. Gorbachev be counted in this category. It has to be the other two most important leaders of the West.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Washington, which forced the U.N. Security Council to adopt sanctions against Iraq for its takeover of Kuwait on Aug. 2, is saying nothing against Israel's refusal to allow a council mission to visit the occupied Arab territories... to investigate the killing of Arab citizens at Al Aqsa Mosque earlier this month, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily. The United States, like all other nations, realises that the council passed a resolution considering null and void Israel's annexation of Arab Jerusalem which is part of the occupied West Bank, but it is doing nothing in the face of Israel's claim that the city is part of Israel, the paper noted. Not only did Israel defy U.N. Security Council Resolution 672, but, it also reaffirmed its determination through its deputy foreign minister Wednesday that no U.N. mission will be allowed to conduct an inquiry, continued Al Ra'i. It said that once again the world is witnessing a double standard being exercised by the Security Council which is obviously acting under orders from Washington, and it will be a severe blow for the United Nations organisation should Israel be allowed to carry on with atrocities without anyone trying to put an end to its crimes. The Arab countries, said the paper, are invited to take unified action against the United States, Israel's ally, which continues to help the Jewish state to consolidate its hold over Arab territory in defiance of the world community and the Council's resolutions.

A columnist in Ra'i daily calls on the Arab organisations, groups and charitable institutions to break the embargo imposed on the Iraqi people and to find ways of delivering food supplies and milk to the Iraqi children. Abdul Rahim Omar says that the Arab people should not wait for the Iraqi children, men and women to die of starvation, and must act now if they want to see the mission of foreign forces in the Arabian peninsula fail. We want to evict the foreign forces from Arab land by any possible means; and one way to do that is to abort their plans to tighten the noose around Iraq's neck, says the writer. He notes that Algeria, Libya and other Arab states have openly announced their determination to back Iraq in its quest to fend off aggression and foil attempts to starve the Iraqi people. Well, now is the time to prove such intentions and to declare our determination to open fire on all the invaders should they start a war against Iraq, the writer says. Omar says that the colonial powers seem now intent on tightening the economic sanctions on Iraq as a means of forcing that country to bow to their will, and they do not want to launch a war which will no doubt leave its devastating consequences on their own interests. He calls for action now to help the Iraqis resist the pressure and to provide badly needed food supplies to the Iraqi children.

Christian Arabs: a long history of heroism

By Ibrahim Ajlouni

ONE century before the advent of Islam, the Christian tribe of Taghle in the Arabian peninsula succeeded in cooperation with a number of other tribes in defeating the Persian forces at the battle of "Thi Qar". That victorious day was later hailed by Prophet Mohammad as marking the first Arab victory over the Persians.

In the Al Qadisiyah battle in modern-day Iraq, Christian horsemen of Taghle played a decisive role marking a big success for the Islamic conquest.

The Christian tribes of the Arabian peninsula also fought side by side with the Muslim warriors in Bilad Al Sham (Greater Syria).

One can name a long list of prominent Christians in Arab history like Hatem Al Ta'i, the most famous Arab characterised with generosity; Humayd Ibn Is'haq, who was the most famous translator in the Islamic period; and Issa Al Awwam, the close friend of Saladin who died in the battle trying to end the foreign siege on Acre during the wars of the Middle Ages called by the West not the Arabs the

Crusades.

In modern times the name of Jol Jamal the Syrian pilot who flew his fighter plane into a French destroyer during the tripartite aggression on Egypt in 1956 is one that Arabs recall with pride.

This is not the right place nor time to publish a bibliography of Arab Christians' contributions to the Islamic nation. Many of these contributions appeared in books by famous scholars. I just want to mention these facts as a prelude to a subject considered most dangerous: the question

of non-Islamic communities in an Islamic society.

This subject has been shrouded with mystery and poor knowledge on the part of hostile elements trying to draw a wedge among Arab ranks.

The Arabs have just become familiar with the term minority, a term used by the enemies of the Arabs to identify the Christian Arabs who inhabit the land of their fathers and grandfathers among their Muslim brothers with whom they worked hard to build Arab and Islamic glory.

I do challenge anybody to bring forth any argument or

evidence that can prove otherwise. The Christian Arabs are by no means minorities. They have never been so at any time in history.

Arab Christians have always been an integral part of their great Arab Nation. They have always identified with their Muslim brothers and together they formulated Islamic culture and identity.

The belief that Christian people form an integral part of the Arab and Islamic nations should be settled once and for all and should not be left open to discussion by the ignorant or

sinister people who can unwittingly do damage to themselves and to their nation. The Holy Koran has clearly ruled that the Christians are the closest people to the Muslims. Christians have fallen martyrs along with their Muslim brothers in defence of their faith in God and are spiritually close to the Muslims, forming with them a single Arab Nation.

The writer is the editor of the literary pages of Al Ra'i Arabic daily. He is a student of philosophy and a confessed Islamist. The article appeared in Al Ra'i on Thursday.

U.S. Congress pushing for role with Bush in war-making

By Carol Giacomo

Reuter

WASHINGTON — President George Bush has so far been the moving force behind U.S. Gulf strategy but now Congress is demanding a role.

Capitol Hill and the White House have often been at odds over war-making powers but the stakes are higher now than at any time since the 1970s. With more than 200,000 troops deployed in the Gulf region, the United States stands to suffer huge casualties if fighting erupts there.

So far, the Bush administration has sent mixed signals on the likelihood of military ac-

tion to force Iraqi troops out of Kuwait.

Congress, which recesses next week until Jan. 3, fears that a military decision will be taken during that period.

Richard Lugar, a respected member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, signalled the depth of this worry on Oct. 17 when Secretary of State James Baker testified to the committee.

The Indiana Republican said it was his "gut reaction" that sometime between the time that we recess... and the time a new Congress has sworn in... there is likely to be military activity in that area and that is

an ominous prospect."

One after another, committee members insisted that the administration — if it is to maintain broad popular support for its policy — must seek congressional approval before undertaking any specific military action against Iraq.

While most of the panel seemed resigned to using force against Iraq, some urged restraint and others stressed the need to act as much as possible under United Nations auspices.

"I feel very strongly, absent some severe provocation, that it would be a tragic mistake of lasting proportions if we

started the shooting," said Democratic Senator Terry Sanford.

Congress has been slow to assert its prerogative in this instance. Lawmakers have generally been supportive of Bush's handling of the Gulf crisis.

But with the prospect of war looming and November elections bringing lawmakers into close touch with voters, they seemed eager to make their point.

"There ought to be a formal commitment of the American people to share that (war-making) responsibility with President Bush and with your-

self, because the undertaking will be massive, and it must be successful," Lugar told Baker.

Congress should be called back into session to vote a formal declaration of war if military action is needed, key lawmakers said.

This lies at the heart of one of the most fundamental conflicts between Congress and the White House in recent history.

The U.S. constitution says Congress declares war but it makes the president commander in chief of the armed forces.

The conflict was starkly drawn during the Vietnam

war, which the United States lost after 55,000 Americans were killed. Once troops were committed by successive presidents, Congress debated for years whether they should be withdrawn.

In 1973, Congress passed the War Powers Act in an effort to outline more clearly the responsibilities in time of combat but this has only inflamed the debate.

In principle, presidents are loathe to share their command of American forces and foreign policy with Congress whose 535 members are accountable through elections to often vastly diverse constituencies.

Lack of central command worries officials in Gulf

By Eric Hall

Reuter

DUBAI — Admirals and generals of the multi-national force in the Gulf are working hard at coordination — the soft alternative to central command.

For a naval blockade and static defence it will suffice, defence officials say, but for a war against Iraq it may not be good enough.

The United States and its allies should muster the political will now to decide who will be in charge if the shooting starts, the officials argue.

"What we need are ministers to

get together and decide," European defence official Jaap de Hoop Scheffer told Reuters.

"You can have commanders meeting together as long as you wish but without ministers' political backing they can make no real decisions."

"If we don't do it now, it might be too late," said de Hoop Scheffer, who visited the region to report on the problem for the defence committee of the Western European Union (WEU).

U.S. forces in the region — 200,000 soldiers, 800 planes, 50 ships, 1,000 armoured fighting vehicles — dwarf other contin-

ents. Only the Americans could contemplate independent military action against Iraq.

The Gulf alliance also includes almost 50 European warships, French, British, and Egyptian armoured units, and the large Saudi army.

They would double U.S. striking power if they could be coordinated under a central command, officials said.

The Gulf crisis has helped revitalize the Paris-based WEU, formed in 1948 but overshadowed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation throughout the East-West confrontation in

Europe, because it is the only joint security alliance empowered to operate outside Western Europe.

"So far, it has proved impossible to define common rules of engagement which are normally the basis for military coordination, and it may take some time before it is realised how vital the subject will be," said de Hoop Scheffer.

One answer, favoured by the Soviet Union, would be a central United Nations (U.N.) command, which could be politically acceptable to countries that oppose Iraq's invasion of Kuwait but do not want to join a military

effort against it under U.S. control.

But U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said on Oct. 17 that while there were ways to involve the United Nations, Washington might have problems with the idea of a U.N. commander and wanted to reserve the option for unilateral action.

The reluctance of countries to give up national command has also been reflected in the structure and size of forces sent.

Britain decided to send an armoured brigade, which is due to arrive in Saudi Arabia soon, because British defence officials

said it was the smallest unit capable of independent action.

The U.S. navy's regional commander, Admiral Henry Mauz, told reporters this week that his officers had regular working meetings with officers of the Canadian, Australian, and 10 Western European navies now in the region.

He said he was sure that any of the alliance's ships would support each other in the event of shooting.

But, he added, each would have to respond within the context of their own government's political positions on the crisis.

Soviets seek Gulf peace solution

(Continued from page 1)

to retain Bubiyan Island, access to the Gulf and "things like that." Bubiyan is an uninhabited island off Kuwait that controls access to Umm Qasr, Iraq's only military port on the Gulf.

Primakov's meeting with Bush marked the completion of a round of diplomatic consultations for the Soviet official, who travelled to Washington after Gulf crisis talks with Italian and French leaders in Rome and Paris.

Earlier Friday, Bush publicly rejected a partial solution to the Gulf crisis, saying the United States will "stay the course" until Iraq's takeover of Kuwait is reversed.

"I am as determined as I was when the first troops left (for Saudi Arabia) that Saddam Hussein's aggression not be rewarded by some compromise, not be rewarded by failing to get him totally out of Kuwait and restoring the legitimate rulers," he said.

Bush was speaking to Italian-American leaders. At a photo session with the president before the start of the meeting, Primakov said he was not carrying a message from the Iraqi leader. "No message from Saddam Hussein, because I am not a messenger," Primakov told reporters.

At the news conference after his talks with Bush, Primakov said Moscow and Washington remained united in insisting that Iraq comply with U.N. resolutions and withdraw from Kuwait. Baker told the House Foreign Affairs Committee Thursday he thought Arab states would join a U.S. military attack on Iraq if a decision was made to go to war.

"That is my view," he said when asked if Arab states such as Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia would support the use of force in the Gulf to drive Iraq from Kuwait.

But Baker said he still hoped for a peaceful solution.

Baker said he believed some European nations would also support the use of force in the Gulf.

Baker said the United States had already begun informal consultation at the United Nations about a resolution authorising the use of force and had been surprised at the positive response.

"We have had some informal discussions with members of the international coalition... about

whether or not they might or might not support some sort of a resolution in the United Nations that would support the use of force," Baker said.

"I was struck, frankly, by the degree of support that seemed to exist in favour of that," he added.

Asked by Representative Tom Lantos, Democrat of California, whether Iraq's alleged dismantling of Kuwait did not impose a strict time limit on how long the international community could afford to wait before taking other action, Baker said he thought it did.

"All I said was... sanctions are beginning to be effective. We know that they're beginning to bite. With respect to their biting to the point of bringing him down... that is something that is going to take, if it happens, a substantial period of time," he said.

Baker was subjected to a blistering attack from Representative Stephen Solarz, Democrat of New York, on his failure to anticipate and seek to deter the invasion.

"I have to say that prior to the inception of this crisis, you and your associates in the administration handled the potential challenge of Saddam Hussein miserably," Solarz said.

Baker, who rebuffed several other attacks by members objecting to what they saw as his anti-Israel policy, offered no response to the charge made by Solarz.

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar Thursday was quoted as saying military action against Iraq would be justified if the Security Council sees no other solution to the Gulf crisis.

The U.N. Charter's Article 42 permits military action. Should the Security Council come to that decision, that would be completely legal," the magazine Der Spiegel quoted the U.N. chief as saying.

He said was up to the Security Council to decide whether military action is needed or to wait and see whether the embargo against Iraq eventually forces it to leave Kuwait, Der Spiegel reported.

"It (the Security Council) can't strengthen the embargo and sanctions against Iraq, because everything possible has already been done," he was quoted as saying in an interview with New York.

The U.N. chief reportedly said, "At the moment I see little move-

ment in the direction of a peaceful solution."

He added, however, "I will never be the first one to say there remains only a military solution of the conflict," Dr Spiegel reported.

France and the Soviet Union said Thursday sanctions against Iraq should be given more time to take effect and a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis could still be found.

French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas, who met his Soviet counterpart Shevardnadze at a hastily-arranged meeting in Vienna, said Paris and Moscow agreed that the international embargo against Iraq needed more time.

"We affirm that the embargo remains the only possible way and that it is necessary to wait for some time more to gauge its effects," Dumas told reporters in Vienna after meetings with Shevardnadze and Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock.

"Both of us hope that these effects will make themselves felt in such a way that the Iraqi authorities will change their attitude and as a consequence there remains the possibility of a peaceful solution — a peaceful and political solution."

Shevardnadze told Mock that Moscow insisted on Iraq's withdrawal from Kuwait and did not accept any linkage between the Gulf crisis and a wider Middle East settlement.

Speaking to reporters on arrival, Shevardnadze said he had no "ready-made concept" for solving the crisis.

"It is difficult to talk about new ideas, I have not brought a ready-made concept with me. I don't believe anyone has such a concept," he told questioners.

Washington is pushing a new Security Council resolution that threatens Iraq with increased sanctions if it does not stop "murdering, mistreating and oppressing" Kuwaitis and free all foreigners.

The resolution threatens Baghdad with "further enforcement measures" under Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter if it does not obey the resolution. However, the document, which was obtained by the Associated Press, does not specify what measures might be taken.

Chapter 7 allows punitive action up to, and including, collective use of military force.

"It's one we hope will pass quickly," a U.S. State Depart-

ment official said of the resolution. He declined to be further identified.

No formal council meeting on the resolution has been scheduled.

The five permanent Security Council members have reached broad agreement on the resolution, which also lays the groundwork for a system of compensation under which Iraq would pay for damages resulting from its invasion of Kuwait, diplomats said.

The British, French, Soviet, Chinese and U.S. ambassadors continued meeting Thursday to refine the language of the resolution, while their governments studied its legal ramifications. More discussions were expected Friday.

In other Gulf developments: — Seventy per cent of people in Britain, Germany, France, Italy and Spain support the use of military force to make Iraq withdraw from Kuwait, according to a poll published Thursday.

Sixty-nine per cent approve of Bush's decision to send armed forces to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, researchers from Gallup, a leading British poll company, found.

Britons are the most "hawkish" of the Europeans: 86 per cent back military action and 80 per cent support Bush's action, according to the poll.

In a corresponding U.S. poll, 70 per cent of Americans said they supported Bush's decision to move troops into the Gulf.

Gallup questioned 500 people in each of the five countries for the poll, commissioned by the London-based Association for Free Kuwait. The margin of error is five per cent.

Japan said Friday it would be sending computers, televisions and water trucks to assist the multinational forces in the Gulf region, as the parliament continued to debate whether any soldiers can be sent abroad.

Japan already has sent hundreds of four-wheel-drive vehicles to Saudi Arabia as part of its commitment to offer \$2 billion in aid to the multinational forces arrayed against Iraq.

Tokyo also has promised to provide \$2 billion in aid to Middle Eastern states hurt by the Gulf crisis and the U.N.-ordered trade embargo against Iraq.

Millions of chemical gas masks are on their way to Saudi Arabia, a civil defence official said in remarks published in the

newspaper Al Riyadh Thursday.

"A large number of masks estimated at millions is expected in the kingdom to protect nationals and residents should civilian targets be subjected to chemical attacks," Colonel Saoud Al Zuneifer told the paper.

He said the first consignment of about three million masks was on its way to the market.

If U.S. troops withdraw from the Gulf without achieving their aims the entire Arab World will radicalise and an Arab-Israeli war will become more likely, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said Thursday.

He said in a speech he expected the Gulf crisis to be resolved by May because of the region's volatility and the unsustainable expense of maintaining the huge U.S. troop deployment there.

"If U.S. troops withdraw without achieving their aims... we will see all the Gulf states, within a measurable period of time, turn radical and an Arab-Israeli war will become immensely more probable," Kissinger said in remarks after his speech to a bankers' association in Chicago.

A relative of the exiled ruler of Kuwait said Iraq is prepared to blow up oil fields and other key installations throughout Kuwait if its troops are forced to withdraw.

Sheikh Mishal Mohammad Al Sabah was quoted by the Amsterdam newspaper De Telegraaf as saying that Iraq will "wipe (Kuwait) off the map" if it is forced to withdraw.

Sabah told the newspaper that the Iraqis had planted explosives that could be detonated by remote control at oil drilling sites, fuel storage tanks, bridges and other sites.

Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti said the Gulf crisis must be resolved before next June's annual pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca.

"It is unthinkable that it should go ahead if the holy places are involved in military operations," he said in an interview published Friday in the Rome daily La Repubblica. "It is equally unthinkable that it should be cancelled."

Cancelling the pilgrimage would cause tension to rise in the Muslim world "to such a point that it would provoke an explosion of unforeseeable consequences," Andreotti said.

"The Gulf crisis must therefore absolutely be solved before then. As you can see, we have not got much time left."

U.N. ponders

(Continued from page 1)

cooperation.

Western countries, especially the United States, want the council to refocus on Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and not to be diverted further by the Arab-Israeli conflict.

A U.S. congressional committee passed a resolution aimed at separating the Gulf crisis from the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The resolution, which only expresses congressional opinion and has no force of law, arose out of concern over what some members of Congress perceive as U.S. efforts to keep Arab states in the coalition against Iraq by condemning Israel.

The measure passed Thursday on a voice vote and was sent to the full House of Representatives for further action.

Committee concern over treatment of Israel was heightened by a message Secretary of State James Baker sent to Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy.

The Oct. 15 message said that Israel's deadly suppression of Palestinians might "unjustly and unfairly" be compared by others to actions by Iraq.

Several committee members expressed outrage at the secretary's message.

Baker told the committee it was a personal message never meant to be made public, expressing his sincere concern in Levy, whom he described as a "good friend. The Israeli government leaked contents of the message.

Passage of the resolution on a voice vote by the House Foreign Affairs committee came after Baker denied that he was linking the two issues in an effort to appease Arab backers of U.S. policies in the Gulf.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has stepped up a verbal barrage against the United States, accusing it of humiliating and endangering Israel to maintain the front against Iraq.

"The driving force in the Middle East committed a grave mistake by trying to buy unity at the expense of humiliating and endangering the state of Israel," Shamir told a farmers' meeting outside Tel Aviv.

"We do not want a fight with the United States... but in my opinion, Israel cannot under any circumstances sign with its own hands a humiliating verdict surrendering its sovereignty over Jerusalem," Shamir said, referring to the resolution.

Jewish leaders unhappy

NEW YORK (AP) — Jewish groups are complaining that U.S. support for Israel for last week's shooting of Palestinians is grossly unfair and said it has strained U.S.-Israeli relations.

"I have never seen representatives of the American Jewish community as incensed and outraged by reactions of the United States in the Security Council," said Seymour D. Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"In effect, our community was sending a message to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue (the White House) that Israel was treated unfairly and a double standard was used," Reich told a news conference after Thomas R. Pickering, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, addressed a meeting of Jewish representatives. Reich was joined by Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the organization.

Hrawi sets deadline

(Continued from page 1) would be open for militiamen who want to join the regular Lebanese armed forces. Political parties would also replace the armed militias, they added.

Dismissing the militias, which ruled the streets of Lebanon through 15 years of war and tore the country to pieces, remains the chief goal of the government. Previous attempts and agreements have failed.

Most of the armed groups were backed, trained and financed by Iraq, Syria, Israel and Iran. Hrawi Thursday pledged to disband the private armies, saying: "Lebanon has moved from the state of war to peace."

"We are in the process of reuniting the country," declared Hrawi, whose troops and Syrian allies drove Aoun from his stronghold in the Christian enclave with a ground assault that killed more than 700 people and wounded 1,500.

"The next step would be disbanding militias, extending the government's authority over all Lebanon, and rehabilitating the army," Hrawi said.

Thousands of young Lebanese bear arms in irregular forces which have fought both an overall civil war and small wars within the religious communities.

The U.S.-trained 30,000-strong regular army spent much of the war on the sidelines. Officials feared intervention would only weaken and disrupt the force — as eventually happened when its commander, Aoun, gained political power in the Christian enclave two years ago.

Hrawi's agriculture minister, Mohsen Dalloul, said the country's rival warring would announce in a few days the dissolution of their militias.

This is one of the key points of an Arab-brokered peace plan reached in the Saudi city of Taif last year to end civil war.

Initially all the militia, including the hardline Christian Lebanese Forces (LF) and the pro-Iranian Hizbollah, pledged to abide by the accord.

Dalloul said any militiamen "who wish to hold a rifle" can go to southern Lebanon and fight Israel which occupies a strip there, patrolled by some 1,000 troops.

Palestinians barred from Aqsa

(Continued from page 1)

were blocked from entering the Lion's Gate to Jerusalem's Old City near the Haram Al Sharif complex which houses Al Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques.

For the past two weeks, police have barred residents of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip from attending the services. This Friday they also turned away all men from Jerusalem who were under age 45.

As a result, fewer than 2,000 Muslims were at the service. On a normal Friday before the 34-month Palestinian uprising, more than 10,000 Muslims would pray at Al Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock mosques.

Also Friday, a Jerusalem magistrate's court ordered two prominent Palestinians kept in jail while police continue an investigation into whether they "incited" the Oct. 8 violence.

Faisal Hussein, the leading activist in the occupied territories, was ordered held seven more days, and Sheikh Mohammad Jamal, deputy Muslim leader of Jerusalem, was remanded for five additional days. Both deny the allegations.

In the occupied territories, Muslims also were blocked from attending Friday prayers by army curfews in many areas.

Curfews kept 145,000 people in their homes in Nabulus, the West Bank's largest city, and in nearby refugee camps.

In the Gaza Strip town of Khan

Legislature okays Gorbachev plan

(Continued from page 1)

Yeltsin was not present. The speech received only five seconds of lukewarm applause.

Gorbachev appealed to the Soviet people and lawmakers at all levels of government to approve his plan immediately.

"I want to call on the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Russian Soviet, all Soviet people and the highest organs of power of other republics to take the only rational course of action justified," Gorbachev said.

Some parts of Gorbachev's plan will require legislative changes approved by the Supreme Soviet, but large sections are to be implemented by the republics. Gorbachev also has sweeping powers, valid until next spring, to unilaterally impose changes needed to overhaul the economy.

Gorbachev acknowledged that some people were asking whether the transition to a market economy was a departure from socialism.

"We are striving not through declarations but in reality to strengthen socialism" by maximizing people's potential, he said.

Gorbachev's plan, distributed to parliamentary committees Tuesday, would transform the moribund Soviet economy in four stages. It sets no deadline for the switch, but says other countries have achieved similar goals in 18 months to two years.

Gorbachev has attempted to merge the more radical Russian 500-day plan — named after economist Stanislav Shatalin — with several other proposals, including a far more conservative plan drafted by Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov.

The 66-page plan begins by cutting the budget deficit and the nation's money supply, increasing

production of consumer goods and boosting agricultural output. In the second stage, prices on roughly 70 per cent of all goods and services would be freed to respond to market forces and small private businesses would be encouraged.

The third stage calls for a free market for housing, a modern banking system and entrepreneurship. The final stage would end government monopolies in many industries and allow the ruble to be freely traded against other world currencies.

The plan would give the ethnically and geographically diverse republics more clout in running the economy. They would have the right to control most of the resources on their territory, override price increases approved by central authorities and decide whether to break up collective farms into private plots.

All but two republics have declared some form of autonomy from the Kremlin. An adviser to Gorbachev said Thursday that critics like Yeltsin were needlessly eroding international confidence in the Soviet Union by attacking the president's economic rescue plan.

"Every such speech robs us of several billion dollars' worth of (foreign) loans," Abel Aganbeyan told a combined meeting of several Supreme Soviet committees.

Aganbeyan charged that "political instability" caused by Yeltsin would force Western banks and countries to think twice about offering loans badly needed to help the Soviet Union during its transition.

The Soviet people are unlikely to endure the inflation and unemployment expected to accompany any switch to a market economy unless it has confidence in the leader carrying out the reforms.

Saudis step up pressure

(Continued from page 1)

preferred not to call at Aqaba because of the "hassle of having them inspected" by the American and other ships patrolling the Red Sea in a bid to enforce the blockade on Iraq and to avoid paying the high war risk insurance, Kavar said.

He explained that ships which carry what the chief of the American fleet patrolling the mouth of the Gulf of Aqaba determines to be "suspect goods" are turned back and allowed in only if the "suspect goods" are unloaded at other ports. This problem, in addition to the 0.25 per cent hull insurance, has led to many shipping lines to resort to transshipment of goods for Aqaba and thus the pile-up at Jeddah.

A shipment of harmless chemicals used in the manufacture of soaps was diverted," Kavar said. "By the time we get the chemicals to Aqaba, the buyer will be paying higher amounts, and this is definitely going to be translated into higher production costs and hence higher prices for the consumer," he noted.

Several Jordanian industries are running low on raw materials and if the situation is permitted to continue, it will result in "a very serious situation for our manufacturing sector," said an official at the Ministry of Industry and Trade.

Kavar said the Saudi customs authorities "are deliberately delaying the clearance process by ignoring our repeated requests." Other shipping officials said at least two vessels sent by Jordanian shipping agents to Jeddah to pick up the

containers were turned back by the Saudis, who said the containers had to be "cleared after inspection by the Saudi customs department."

"If indeed such inspection is involved, what then is stopping them from doing it and getting it over with?" asked one of the officials.

"We are planning a test case by sending 70 containers to Jeddah in the next two weeks and we will see how it goes with the Saudis," Kavar said.

In the meantime, contacts with insurance underwriters and shipping circles in Europe have brought about a reduction in the hull insurance on Aqaba-bound ships to 0.15 per cent and then to 0.1 per cent from 0.25 per cent, Kavar said.

"I have been informed by Lloyds of London that this has gone into effect as of Oct. 18," he said. "This is the first step, and we hope we can achieve further progress in regularising the flow of goods to Aqaba," he said.

But he concedes that it is going to be an uphill task. "What the Western world appears to be deliberately overlooking is the fact that Jordan is strictly adhering to the international sanctions against Iraq," Kavar said.

"For us, shipping agents, it has become a way of life that no goods bound for Iraq and originating in Iraq are handled through Aqaba, and we have accepted it," he said. "It seems that the West does not want to acknowledge this, and whatever we are trying to do to ensure Jordan-bound goods, strictly for consumption in Jordan, reach us is being thwarted by pressure from all sides," he said.

Heath arrives en route to Iraq

(Continued from page 1)

elderly and sick, and in some cases those who are dying, should be able to return home," he said. According to Heath, "no-one in Britain wants war... the U.N. does not want war."

Heath, 74, paid tribute to Jordan's efforts to find a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis. "Jordan is in an extraordinary position," he said. "It has been trying, from the beginning, to settle the problem peacefully," he said. "We have a great understanding for King Hussein."

Heath announced his trip to Baghdad last week and drew criticism from Thatcher as well as other British lawmakers. His relations with Thatcher have been frosty since then, partly because his announcement was made at a Conservative Party conference and made headlines in the British press, eclipsing the conference itself.

The next day he said the Iraqi embassy called him in the middle of the night asking him to postpone the trip for a week.

The government, which refuses negotiations with Iraq, has said Heath will be offered all the "normal courtesies" from the British embassy in Baghdad.

British Muslims who secured the release of four Britons from Iraq in an earlier mission to Baghdad have said there was a good chance Heath would persuade Saddam to free more Britons.

Saddam has shown himself open to negotiation with high-ranking officials on the foreigners held in Iraq. Austrian President Kurt Waldheim managed to

negotiate the release of Austrian hostages after visiting Saddam in Baghdad.

Members of the government were angered by Heath last month when he said Saddam was no Adolf Hitler and urged world leaders to make a deal with him to avoid war.

Heath was reluctant to discuss the number of Britons he would ask to be freed, but the Foreign Office estimated that 42 Britons were judged "sufficiently sick to warrant special attention on humanitarian grounds."

Britain has around 1,400 nationals trapped in Iraq and Kuwait, the highest number of any Western country.

Iraq has said it will release eight Germans it holds, the Bonn Foreign Ministry announced Friday.

A ministry spokesman said the eight are on a list relayed to the Iraqi government of "humanitarian cases," in other words people who may be needing care.

He said an exact date has not been set for the release of the eight, "but the Foreign Ministry is striving for a quick exit."

A day earlier Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher summoned Iraq's ambassador in Bonn and demanded the release of all foreigners held in Iraq.

More than 300 Germans are trapped inside Iraq, and 13 are in Kuwait.

A German-Arabic friendship group said the release had been secured by Dieter Schimel, a German Social Democratic member of the European Parliament who visited Baghdad last week.

U.N. envoy reports on Jordan

(Continued from page 1)

Jordanian government when it tells us it is going to observe the sanctions."

"We see substantial evidence of major efforts" by Jordan "to observe the sanctions," despite its "very difficult circumstances," he added.

Ripert said much of the trucks seen on the road to the Iraqi border are not sanction-busters, but are Jordanian refugees from Iraq and Kuwait who are having their household goods shipped back to them in Jordan.

Iraqi trucks cannot cross the border, said Ripert, so the Jordanians have been sending trucks there to receive the furniture and other household goods.

About 100,000 to 120,000 Jordanian workers fled Iraq and Kuwait with their families after the invasion, he said.

Ripert said Prime Minister Mudar Badran promised that more border control points will be set up, and he said the officials all seemed determined to obey the economic embargo.

"I come back with no doubt that the authorities in Jordan are doing their best to implement the

resolution," said Ripert. Ripert said it was absolutely essential that other countries come to Jordan's aid to prevent its economic collapse.

Although the council already has asked nations to provide Jordan with urgent technical, financial and other assistance, Ripert said there had been a lot of pledges but little aid.

"Jordan has not taken any decision (on the oil question)," he said. "Its decision will depend on what the rest of the world will do."

Some diplomats on the Security Council's Sanctions Committee have said privately that unless Jordao completely obeys the U.N. embargo, approved in Resolution 661 on Aug. 6, it does not qualify for any special relief aid.

The port of Aqaba, which used to serve as a major port for Baghdad, has been idled by the embargo, and most of the truck drivers who used to carry supplies from Aqaba to Baghdad are out of work.

Tourism has vanished, said Ripert, and the idling of the port means Jordan has trouble exporting any of its fruits and vegetables.

He added that the American "procrastination at the Security Council made the resolution void of its content."

Qasem pointed out that Jordan fully supports the PLO request for convening the Security Council to force Israel to accept Resolution 672 and to implement it.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz said "the Zionist entity would not have been able to survive in our region had it not been for the political and economic support of the major imperialist forces."

Aziz stressed the need for crystallising a pan-Arab position at the current stage which the Arab Nation is facing saying that it is one of the most delicate stage the Arab World has witnessed.

Aziz expressed appreciation of former Arab League Secretary General Chadi Klibi who resigned from his post as a result of the developments in the region.

Iraq announces fuel rationing

(Continued from page 1)

in September but Western correspondents say there is no outward sign of serious shortages in the shops.

Chalabi said petrol quotas would be set at the weekend and ration coupons distributed to owners of all petrol driven cars from Saturday.

Baghdad newspapers published the oil ministry announcement without giving any reasons for the rationing.

The announcement said drivers could collect coupons from centers set up all over Iraq's 18

provinces. It made no mention of Kuwait which Baghdad annexed and declared its 19th province after the invasion.

It urged Iraqis to "cooperate with us in applying the rationing system to guarantee the acquiring of petrol and lubricating oil regularly to serve our dear country while it faces a savage imperialist attack."

Rationing was announced the day after Iraq tried to woo oil buyers by offering cheap crude at \$21 a barrel. It promised not to touch any payments until the Gulf crisis ended.

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Kuwait hopes investments stay intact even in war

LONDON (Agencies) — Kuwait's toppled central bank governor does not expect to be forced into selling the nation's \$100 billion investments to raise cash, even if war breaks out in the Gulf.

But Sheikh Salem Abdul Aziz Al Sabah, a member of the royal family, said in an interview with Reuters that he would consider a shift in investment which could mean increasing holdings of U.S. treasury bonds to preference to equities.

Such a switch in the nation's investment portfolio would help indirectly fund the United States in any war effort.

The governor said even open conflict in the Gulf — provided it did not lead to huge demands for cash help from the United States and its allies — would not necessarily mean Kuwait having to liquidate its investments.

"In this situation you are not necessarily liquidating. You are also moving from an equity to a treasury bond, to finance for example, the (United) States," he said.

The toppled Kuwait government, he said, could easily finance existing commitments

totaling about \$5 billion over the last quarter of this year. But if it had to raise that amount in one month, then it would have to sell assets.

But he did not think it was likely there would be demand for more cash. "So far, I'm seeing no need to liquidate unless... the obligations are very high on a short term basis," he said.

The toppled government is contributing to the cost of the multinational force in the Gulf and to aid for "frontline states" hit by U.N. sanctions against Iraq.

In addition, it is trying to help its citizens now in exile following the Iraqi takeover of Kuwait.

Finance Minister Ali Al Khalfi Al Sabah said Kuwait's overseas investments, controlled by the Kuwait Investment Office in London, total about \$100 billion and generate yearly revenue of some \$9 billion.

In addition to its investment income, Kuwait retains some 15 to 20 per cent of its old oil income, based on sales of refined oil products from its European network of about 6,500 petrol stations and three refineries.

Dollar ends at new low

LONDON (R) — The dollar closed at a new European low Friday amid widespread speculation that the U.S. currency could head even lower after a brief period of consolidation.

Oil prices also suffered another sharp decline in Europe when a senior Iraqi official set off a wave of sell orders by introducing the possibility of a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis.

Gold firmed \$6.50 an ounce to close in London at \$373.25 an ounce after a sharp fall earlier in the week.

Lower oil prices and an early surge on Wall Street combined with an overnight gain in Tokyo to lead European share prices to mostly higher levels.

The dollar hit a new European low of 1.4950 marks in early business Friday and, despite a small recovery, ended at its lowest all-time close in London at 1.5030 marks.

The U.S. currency was fairly steady against the yen, however, edging a touch higher to 125.95 yen from 125.25 in London Tuesday.

"We're at a certain level now where people are starting to think before going ahead, pausing for breath because the falls have been very fast," said Steve Major, currency analyst at London brokers UBS Phillips and Drew.

Some traders see the dollar falling as low as 1.45 marks in the near-term. They said a brief recovery may be seen before the dollar slips to those levels.

But diplomats said Thursday that the U.S. may want to avoid letting markets think they can continue dollar selling at current levels.

North Sea Brent blend, an international benchmark, slid to its lowest price in more than a month at \$33.30 a barrel after comments by Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Taha Yassin Ramadan stripped the war premium out of the spot market.

"There is serious thinking to find a peaceful outlet to the crisis, he it on the Arab or European arenas," the Iraqi deputy prime minister said in Amman.

Letters of credit dealings plunge

Crisis in Gulf changes image of banking business in Jordan

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — An uneasy calm appears to have set into Jordanian banking, with bankers reporting business as usual in personal accounts after a period of panic withdrawals prompted by fear of war in the Gulf. But there is a sharp decline in export and import dealings as a result of the Gulf crisis and an acute shortage of foreign currency in cash.

"The prevailing feeling is one of superficiality," said a senior official at one of the leading banks. "Our dealings in letters of credit for imports have declined by as much as 50 per cent, and most of our clients are also having problems in meeting their overdraft obligations," the official said.

"There has been an increase in remittances from expatriates in other Gulf states such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar because of fears of instability in the event of war," he added. "But this does not compensate for the sudden turn-off in the flow of funds from our expatriates to Kuwait," he said.

The estimated 250,000 plus Jordanian wage-earning expatriates in Kuwait sent home around \$500 million in 1989 and a conservative estimate put the figure around \$150 million in actual receipts during the first six months of this year. It was expected that the total expatriate

remittances would reach \$800 million during 1990 compared with \$640 million in 1989.

At least four Jordanian banks are reporting a similar situation. "We do have the liquidity in foreign exchange but the problem is that most of our clients had been exporters to Iraq, and now with the international sanctions against Iraq in place they are hard put to find alternative markets, and hence the decline in demand for export credit facilities," said an official at the Arab Bank.

Iraq, the main trading partner for Jordan, used to account for 25 per cent of all Jordanian exports and 40 per cent of all phosphates and potash were excluded.

In addition, Jordanian banks also used to serve as clearing houses for Iraqi exports and imports through Amman and "this is an area where the entire scene is frozen," said an official at the Central Bank.

Banks affirmed that the spate of panic withdrawals from personal accounts and the switch to foreign currency has subsided, particularly with signals that a war may not be an immediate prospect in the region.

"About 40 per cent of withdrawals from personal accounts during August and until mid-September have been returned to the accounts," said the head of personal accounts at the Jordan National Bank. "Applications for premature termination of fixed

deposits have also subsided," the official added.

Sufian Sartawi, director-general of the Jordan Kuwait Bank, who had complained of panic withdrawals and account closure at his bank in the first few days after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2, agreed that there was no pressure as far as personal accounts are concerned, but the sanctions against Iraq have dealt a severe blow to export and import accounts.

"Personal account holders have realised that our bank had very little to do with the economy of Kuwait despite our name," Sartawi told the Jordan Times. "So, in this regard we are more or less out of trouble, but banking in general has suffered a lot."

Dr. Maher Waked, executive director of Bank of Jordan, said the trend in Jordanian banking was to turn more to personal accounts and facilities in a bid to make up for whatever is possible in terms of losses in other areas. But, he noted, "this is a limited area."

Some banks are offering credit facilities up to 10 times the monthly income of salaried employees and repayment periods of as much as 30 to 36 months.

All banks contacted by the Jordan Times said there was a steady demand for foreign currency in cash against a low level of availability. "It is not a question of liquidity," said a source at

the Grindlays Bank. "Many prefer to have hard cash with them under the so-called under-the-mattress assurance, and this has led to the disappearance from the market of foreign currency in bank notes."

Most banks are bringing in foreign currency in cash from Europe through couriers and charging an extra two to five per cent from its customers for bank notes in American dollars, sterling pounds and other European currencies.

"We are requesting our customers to give us at least 48 hours of notice for big amounts in foreign currency in cash," said another banker. "This gives us time to fly in currency from Europe."

In the meantime, the drop in the value of the American dollar in the international market has yet to have any impact on the "parallel (black) market" where the greenback was sold Thursday for 725 fils while the official rate set by the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) was 655 fils.

Prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the difference between the daily CBJ rate and the black market rate for the dollar was not more than 15 to 20 fils and senior CBJ officials have said that it was acceptable under international prudence that governments had to step in only if the difference exceeded 10 per cent of the currency's value.

Austerity keeps Vatican deficit down

VATICAN CITY (Agencies) — Economising by cardinals who gave up first class flights, and secretaries who forsook pay rises have helped the Vatican contain its rising deficit.

The Vatican said Thursday its 1989 operating deficit at \$54.7 million, \$11.2 million more than 1988 but \$23.3 million less than had been forecast, a statement said.

Vatican sources said all departments had been told last year to cut back expenses by 15 per cent and eliminate waste.

"Everybody is trying to travel less, and those cardinals who used to fly first class are not doing it anymore," a Vatican source said.

Departments were buying fewer newspapers, streamlining operations, not filling vacancies and holding down salaries.

Mariano Cerrullo, president of the Lay Vatican Employees' Union, said some salaries had not risen since 1985.

The Holy See's budget covers the Catholic Church's central administration, including its diplomatic missions around the world, the Observator Romano newspaper and Vatican Radio.

It does not include the budget to run Vatican City, a sovereign walled state in Rome, or assets of the controversial Vatican bank, which was involved in a major scandal connected with the bankruptcy of Italy's Banco Amhro-

siano in 1982.

The Holy See's income comes mostly from investments, real estate holdings and contributions.

The statement issued after a three-day meeting of cardinals who oversee finances, said the deficit had been contained because of a drive to save money and streamline operations.

As in past years, most of the deficit was covered by funds from "Peter's Pence," a special collection dating back 12 centuries, which is gathered once a year in churches around the world for the Pope's personal use.

Before the Holy See began running large deficits to the 1980s, Peter's Pence was traditionally destined for missions and charitable works.

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES			
Thursday, October 18, 1990 Central Bank official rates			
	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	650.0	654.0	
Pound Sterling	1277.3	1285.0	
Deutschemark	431.8	434.4	
Swiss franc	514.6	517.7	
French franc	128.8	129.6	
Japanese yen (for 100)	523.2	526.3	
Dutch guilder	383.1	385.4	
Swedish crown	116.1	116.8	
Italian lira (for 100)	57.7	58.0	
Belgian franc (for 10)	206.7	210.0	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES			
LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.			
	One Sterling	One U.S. dollar	U.S. dollar
	1.9570/80	1.1645/55	Canadian dollar
	1.5045/50	1.5045/50	Deutschemark
	1.6965/75	1.6965/75	Dutch guilders
	1.2700/10	1.2700/10	Swiss francs
	30.93/98	30.93/98	Belgian francs
	5.0410/60	5.0410/60	French francs
	1127/1128	1127/1128	Italian lire
	126.85/95	126.85/95	Japanese yen
	5.5925/75	5.5925/75	Swedish crowns
	5.8525/75	5.8525/75	Norwegian crowns
	5.7325/7425	5.7325/7425	Danish crowns
	372.50/373.00	372.50/373.00	U.S. dollars

WORLD STOCK MARKETS	
TOKYO — Tokyo stocks closed firmer as the yen's strength and firmer bond prices lured investors from Japan and abroad back into the market. The Nikkei gained 114.41 points or 0.47 per cent to 24,481.49.	
HONG KONG — The Hang Seng index closed 41.43 points up at 2,991.95. Reports that Iraq softened its tone raised some hopes of a peaceful solution of the Gulf crisis.	
FRANKFURT — German shares ended a quiet trading session 0.8 per cent higher, with dealers generally confident that, barring a severe downturn in the Gulf crisis, the worst of its impact on share prices is now behind them. The 30-share DAX index ended 12.02 points higher at 1,482.09.	
PARIS — French share prices were quoted slightly lower as operators decided to sell at the higher levels resulting from recent weaker oil prices. The CAC-40 index stood at 1,644.16 by 1150 GMT, down 3.51 francs from Thursday night's close.	
ZURICH — Shares ended higher to active trading, boosted by lower oil prices and Wall Street's sharply higher opening. The SMI index of leading shares, was up 0.97 per cent at 1,484.5.	
LONDON — U.K. shares drifted lower in late end-of-account trade after a midsession rally ran out of steam. Prices were boosted by traders squaring short positions taken in the ERM entry euphoria at the start of the two-week account. By 1510 GMT, the FTSE 100 index was 7.1 points up at 2089.7.	
NEW YORK — U.S. blue chips edged lower as investors stepped back after running up prices sharply in early trading. The Dow was up about 27 to 2,480.	

Soaring energy prices push up U.S. inflation, widen trade gap

WASHINGTON (AP) — Surging oil prices drove imports to a new record in August and helped propel the U.S. merchandise trade deficit to its highest level in seven months, the government reported Thursday.

Analysts said that excluding the oil factor, the trade picture actually improved as exports continued to grow moderately. Nevertheless, soaring energy costs were adversely affecting the economy and driving up inflation.

In its first report on America's trade gap since Iraq invaded Kuwait on Aug. 2 and disrupted international oil markets, the Commerce Department said imports rose 1.8 per cent, to \$42.0 billion, while exports gained 1.6 per cent, to \$32.6 billion.

The difference meant a \$9.3 billion imbalance, up 2.4 per cent from July and the largest since a \$10.2 billion gap last January. The non-oil deficit, on the other hand, fell from \$5.4 billion in July to \$5.0 billion the following month.

The previous record for imports was \$41.6 billion in March this year.

"If you throw out energy, the trade picture shows gradual continuing improvement," said

Donald Ratajczak, economist at Georgia State University.

Nevertheless, "the deficit is going to be plagued at least through the end of the year by increasing oil imports," said economist Mark Zandi of Regional Financial Associates in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

The volume of imported oil actually declined in August, down 10.3 per cent to 7.95 million barrels a day. But a hefty 34.8 per cent price gain, to \$19.54 a barrel, pushed overall petroleum costs up 20.9 per cent to \$4.8 billion. And the price of oil has since doubled to nearly \$40 a barrel.

Bruce Steinberg, senior economist with Merrill Lynch Capital Markets in New York, said despite the boost in the deficit, the trade gap still could end the year under \$100 billion for the first time since 1983.

For the first eight months of 1990, the deficit was running at an annual rate of \$96.8 billion, compared to \$110.7 billion during the same period last year.

Zandi said the nation's trade problems could benefit from a weakening U.S. economy.

"What we may see is that imports of automobiles and industrial goods will fall and offset

the oil import bill," he said.

However, imports of foreign-made cars rose 2.1 per cent, to \$3.39 billion, in August.

Exports, on the other hand, rebounded from a 6.1 per cent decline in July.

"The good news is that the lower dollar is still helping on the export side and we saw at least a modest further increase," said economist David Jones of Aubrey G. Lantson and Co., a New York securities dealer. "The hope is that modest growth in the export sector will help offset the weakness we see in all the other major sectors of the economy."

J. Antonio Villamil, Commerce Department chief economist, noted that "export growth has been the major contributor to the increases in overall economic activity during the year," and said, "we expect this trend to continue."

Indeed, fully one-third of overall U.S. economic growth for the last three years has been supplied by export sales. They had become even more important recently as consumer spending has slowed.

But economists believe the oil price shock is likely to further weaken the economy and drive it into a recession — if it isn't there already.

Romania lifts price, wage controls

BUCHAREST (AP) — Prime Minister Petre Roman Thursday announced the lifting of most price and wage controls in conjunction with a devaluation of the lei currency.

The new measures, which take effect Nov. 1, are "a leap toward a market economy," but could cause inflation and unemployment, Roman said in a speech to both houses of parliament.

However, he said, "this is the price we must pay to fill stores, combat speculation and correct the economy."

Subsidies are to be maintained for the moment on energy, rents, and some food items. It was not clear how much the uncontrolled prices actually would increase on Nov. 1.

Items supplied by less than three producers will remain price-controlled because of insufficient competition to regulate prices on a market basis.

Under the centralized economy

inherited from the communists, prices and salaries were set without connection to their real market value.

Since the December revolution, both productivity and production have fallen by more than 20 per cent. But wages have increased by 11 per cent.

At present, 50,000 of the country's workforce of 12 million people are registered as unemployed. But Roman warned that "hidden unemployment" is much higher. He estimated that to avoid massive unemployment about 700,000 "inefficient" workers and another 300,000 of next year's graduates would have to be retrained.

The gas flow resumed last April at a rate of three billion cubic metres a year. Iranian officials said prices would be set according to international rates and estimated minimum annual revenue at \$300 million.

Iran's largely untapped gas reserves are second only to those of the Soviet Union.

Nourbakhsh said the two sides were discussing changes in the terms of gas sales to the Soviet Union in line with recent economic reforms there. He did not elaborate.

He said the Soviet Union had assured Iran that it was committed to completing development projects in Iran, including dams and power plants, on time.

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Rebels blame Phnom Penh for escalating war, sabotaging peace

BANGKOK (R) — The Khmer Rouge said Friday the Phnom Penh government had begun a large-scale offensive against guerrilla strongholds, sabotaging a peace agreement reached by the warring Cambodian factions less than six weeks ago.

In a broadcast by its clandestine radio, the Khmer Rouge, strongest of three guerrilla groups in a coalition fighting the Phnom Penh government, said Phnom Penh and its Vietnamese backers were renegeing on a United Nations plan endorsed in Jakarta to end the decade-old war.

"The (coalition) appeals to all friendly countries, near and far, to seek by all means to prevent the Hanoi authorities' and Phnom Penh factions' manoeuvre to sabotage the U.N. document and the Jakarta communiqué," the guerrilla radio said.

The radio was quoting a statement by the coalition's Foreign Ministry, which is controlled by the Khmer Rouge.

Officials of the coalition's other two factions said they had not approved the statement but agreed with its contents.

Moves by the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council to allow the world body a central role in ending the war sapped when the Cambodian groups failed to agree on a Supreme National Council (SNC) to start the process off.

Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said Thursday he would consult with France, fellow co-chairman of Cambodian peace talks, about holding another international peace conference.

Inside Cambodia, guerrillas said the government was building up slowly towards a large-scale

offensive when the monsoon ends in a few weeks. They said rains and rampant malaria had so far limited movement of both sides.

The government had shipped in large amounts of weaponry and Vietnamese troops to retake guerrilla positions overrun when Hanoi pulled out its forces a year ago, they said.

Using helicopters, boats and transport planes Phnom Penh had overcome logistics problems caused by guerrilla sabotage and weather to move supplies from Phnom Penh and the southern port at Kompong Som to western Cambodia.

Guerrillas said shelling had already begun in several areas.

"The (Khmer Rouge) sternly denounce and condemn the Hanoi authorities for escalating their war of aggression against and occupation of Cambodia,"

the radio said.

There has been no means of independently confirming reports of Vietnamese troops returning to Cambodia. The tripartite coalition has routinely accused Hanoi of sending in troops.

The Khmer Rouge said Phnom Penh had launched attacks across the country since September, particularly in the Western province of Battambang and the central provinces of Kompong Thom and Kompong Cham.

Government forces had also been sent to retake the Khmer Rouge-held town of Pailin, a gem-rich area less than 20 kilometres from the Thai border, the radio said.

On Friday guerrillas loyal to Prince Norodom Sihanouk overran a government base at Kauk Mon in northern Cambodia, officials from the faction said.

Up to 30 dead in Czech mine explosion

KARVINA, Czechoslovakia (R) — At least 22 people died when a methane gas explosion and fire ripped through a Czechoslovak coal mine 750 metres underground.

Eight men were still missing 16 hours after the disaster, Czechoslovakia's worst in recent years, and the mine's manager said he did not think anyone had survived.

Rescuers worked all night to locate bodies and secure the mineshafts. All rescue work was stopped while safety teams inspected shafts and tunnels.

Jan Carnecny, director of the First of May Complex — three mines at Karvina, near the Polish border — said the reason for the explosion was not known.

He said Friday morning that 19 bodies had been identified, two more were being brought to the surface and another man had died in hospital.

German police find no evidence of fraud at former Communist HQ

BERLIN (R) — About 150 armed police raided the headquarters of East Germany's reformed Communist Party early Friday, but they failed to discover evidence of a suspected 100 million mark (\$66 million) embezzlement.

About 80 plainclothes policemen, some wearing bullet-proof vests, searched the Party of Democratic Socialism's (PDS) headquarters for six hours. Scores of uniformed officers sat in police vans surrounding the building.

"There isn't slightest suspicion that the PDS put money aside or misappropriated funds," state prosecutor Bernd Stange told reporters afterwards.

The police acknowledged that they had no search warrant, but they met no violent resistance.

Witnesses said the police threatened to break open the locked offices of party chairman Gregor Gysi and East Germany's last Communist premier, Hans

Moldrow, but party workers eventually opened them.

Stange said the police had found no evidence of embezzlement, only money transfers made by the PDS to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

"These transfers cover old liabilities incurred by the predecessor Party, the SED," Stange said. Investigators were still checking whether the transfers were legal.

PDS Vice-Chairman Andre Brie said the payments were for student scholarships and an education centre in the Soviet Union.

He said they fulfilled commitments made by the PDS's predecessor, the Socialist Unity Party (SED), which imposed hardline Communist rule on East Germany for 40 years.

Brie said the PDS's only mistake had been not to tell a parliamentary commission investigating Communist property and funds about the transfers. It was not clear how much money was

involved.

PDS leaders condemned the police raid as an over reaction.

One senior party official, Klaus Steinitz, said it reminded him of anti-Communist intimidation in the run-up to the Nazi takeover of Germany.

Anti-Communist resentment is still strong in East Germany, although the PDS has dissociated itself from the Communists' hard-line rule.

Meanwhile a former West German diplomat admitted in court Thursday that he spied for now-extinguished East Germany for nearly 30 years.

Hagen Blau, 55, told a Dueseldorf court he worked for East German intelligence while based in Bonn, Tokyo, Vienna and Sri Lanka.

In a separate development President George Bush, without fanfare, Thursday signed ratification documents for the treaty formally ending the post-World War II division of Germany.

Yugoslavia names controversial Croatian to collective presidency

BELGRADE (AP) — Yugoslavia's federal parliament moved Friday to defuse mounting ethnic tensions and warnings of civil war by naming a controversial Croatian member of the country's collective presidency.

Deputies from the largest Republic of Serbia, Croatia's traditional rival, had earlier blocked the election of Stjepan Mesić to the collective ruling body, charging he was a Croatian nationalist who seeks independence for Croatia.

But those objections apparently were dropped following moves within the eight-man presidency, which contains representatives from each of Yugoslavia's quarrelling regions, to defuse tension.

Mesić was proclaimed a member of the presidency to the applause of hundreds of deputies. The parliamentary session then adjourned, breaking into committee meetings.

The action indicated that leading politicians had decided in closed negotiations to postpone the scheduled crucial debate on

whether Yugoslavia remains a federation, as advocated by Serbia, or becomes a loose confederation of six sovereign states, as demanded by Croatia and Slovenia.

Croatia and Slovenia elected center-right governments to replace Communists earlier this year and seek the greater independence offered by the confederative solution.

Serbia, by contrast, is still controlled by Communists and wants power to remain in Belgrade, the federal and Serbian capital.

Hours before parliament opened Friday, the Republic of Croatia ordered the mobilisation of its militia reserves.

The announcement, broadcast on Croatian and then Serbian television late Thursday, said only that Croatia was conducting a "routine check" of reserve units. The state news agency Tanjug said it learned that arms had been distributed to some reserve forces.

Croatian President Franjo Tudjman said Thursday that "if necessary, the entire Croatian

people at home and abroad will fight to protect the democracy it won."

Croatia would not tolerate any "solutions that have proved fatal for the economic and democratic development."

In recent months, members of the Serbian minority in Croatia have staged demonstrations and seized arms from police, and some Serbs have called for absorbing areas of Croatia.

Slovenia's delegate on the eight-member federal presidency, Janez Drnovsek, said Serbia's Communist leaders were "forcing the federal concept that could only lead to the breakup of the country."

Speaking at a news conference in Ljubljana, the Slovenian capital, he added that rival leaders should continue their talks.

"At this moment it would be extremely risky to stop a dialogue between republics that would lead to the final breakup of the country," he said. "A ceasefire should be introduced among the republics to create a positive atmosphere for negotiations."

Pakistani politicians strike at U.S. to hit Bhutto

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Benazir Bhutto's political opponents have found a potent response to growing sympathy for the ousted prime minister: American-bashing.

President Ghulam Ishaq Khan ousted Ms. Bhutto, accusing her of corruption and mismanagement, on Aug. 6. She is running in next week's general election despite facing a court battle. But Khan's hand-picked caretaker government is pressing an aggressive campaign against her.

They filed charges after she charged against her father-in-law and a half-dozen former cabinet ministers alleging they used their power to get rich fast. They jailed her husband on charges of kidnapping and extortion.

They branded her an unbeliever, an enemy of Islam and a traitor.

But the onslaught only damaged the credibility of the president and the caretaker government, making both appear vindictive and generating sympathy for Ms. Bhutto and her populist, centre-left Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

It seemed nothing could stop her unexpected rebound.

The U.S. Ambassador Robert Oakley, in a speech in Washington, noted that Ms. Bhutto's opponents are not above reproach. Pakistanis have voiced similar views, but many were outraged by Oakley's comments.

Newspapers wrote numerous editorials accusing Washington of blatant interference and suggested U.S. influence over this country of 110 million people should be greatly curtailed. Some caretaker ministers called Oakley's statements unpatriotic; one demanded that Washington replace him.

Pakistan is the third-largest recipient of American aid after Egypt and Israel. It has also been conduit for an estimated \$300 million in assistance to the Afghan resistance during the 12-year-old civil war in Afghanistan.

The Oakley fire subsided briefly. Then 53 U.S. senators reportedly wrote a letter to President George Bush warning that economic and military aid would be cut off if Ms. Bhutto were disqualified from the election. Forty-four Pakistani senators wrote a blistering response, saying that was a matter for the court — not the U.S. Congress — to decide.

In the rhetoric of the People's Party, Ms. Bhutto "became the American puppet, someone willing to give away her country's sovereignty," said one Western diplomat, insisting on anonymity.

"It played nicely into her opponents' hands. They parlayed it nicely into an election issue and dampened the PPP. Now the momentum may be swinging the other way,"

Ms. Bhutto, who was educated in the United States, is considered by many in the West, especially the United States, as a symbol of democracy in South Asia. She has capitalised on that image and cemented strong ties with Washington.

An undercurrent of anti-Americanism always runs through Pakistan, which tends to blame the United States for all its problems during times of crisis.

It surfaced again on Oct. 1 when Washington suspended a \$573 million aid package demanding greater assurances that Pakistan neither possesses nor wants to possess nuclear weapons.

The caretaker government blamed Bhutto for the aid suspension, a charge she dismissed.

"Ms. Bhutto, her mother and the PPP have been lobbying in the United States to get our aid stopped," caretaker Prime Minister Ghulam Mustafa Jatoi charged Thursday. "They have been working against the national interest for the sake of their petty benefit to pressure the government of Pakistan and to win in the election."

Even though he mentioned no one by name, Pakistan's most powerful soldier, army Chief-of-Staff Gen. Mirza Aslam Beg, issued his own warning — to the Americans and to Pakistan's next prime minister. Military sources said it was the first time he has made such comments.

In an hour-long speech to his

troops earlier this week, Beg vowed Pakistan would not compromise its principles. He warned leaders not to look for "outside direction or guidance."

"And those looking for such political guidance and support for promoting their political ambitions are certain to be frustrated," he said.

"There's a lot of nationalism now in Pakistan," said one Commonwealth diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"There's a growing feeling that Pakistan needs to be more aligned with the Islamic World and less with the Western world."

The Pakistani premier Thursday accused politicians supporting Bhutto of generating fears of martial law and cancelled elections.

"The politicians who are going to face defeat are spreading rumours that elections will be cancelled and martial law imposed," Jatoi said a news conference.

"Elections will be held, elections will certainly be held and elections are going to be held," Jatoi emphasised. "By the grace of God, I can say ten times over that elections will be held on Oct. 24."

"If Bhutto is an astrologer, or in direct contact with God Almighty, she may have information that she is going to be arrested, but we have no intention to do so," said Jatoi.



Margaret Thatcher loses party stronghold in shock by-election

LONDON (R) — Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher suffered one of her biggest setbacks in 11 years in power Friday when her ruling Conservatives lost a by-election in what had been one of their safest parliamentary seats.

Against a backdrop of a worsening economy, the tiny Liberal Democrat Party overturned a Conservative majority of nearly 17,000 to carry the seaside town of Eastbourne by 4,550 votes.

"This is the beginning of the end of Thatcherism as we know it," said David Bellotti, a 47-year-old local councillor who won the sensational victory for the Liberal Democrats.

Conservative legislator Ian Gow was killed by an Irish Republican Army car bomb in July.

"This is a hammer blow against the government," said Neil Kinnock, leader of the main opposition Labour Party, who hopes to oust Thatcher from the premiership in a general election due no later than mid-1992.

Eastbourne lies in the Conservatives' electoral fortress — affluent southern England. They held it since 1906 and it was among their 25 safest constituencies.

S. Korean premier returns from North with optimism

PANMUNJOM, Korea (R) — South Korean Prime Minister Kang Young-Hoon returned Friday from a four-day Pyongyang visit that chipped away slightly at the 45-year cold war between the two Koreas.

The 63-year-old former general and his 89-member entourage crossed the heavily fortified border here to receive bouquets and greetings from 10 young women in billowing traditional dresses.

"The ice is still frozen on the top, but we could feel that spring was arriving on North Korean soil," Southern delegation spokesman Im Dong-Won told reporters.

"We now have confidence that the South and North will be able to break the wall of distrust and confrontation between the South and the North through these high-level talks," he said.

In substance the visit to Pyongyang produced little but an agreement for another meeting in Seoul from Dec. 11 to 14.

Kang briefed President Roh Tae-Woo at his official residence Friday afternoon and state radio later reported Kang confirmed the desire of North Korean President Kim Il-Sung to meet Roh.

"The people's expectations for reunification of the South and the North are very high, but we have to take a step-by-step approach in resolving problems," the television quoted Roh as telling Kang.

The Pyongyang session, markedly less cordial than the first prime ministers' meeting in Seoul in September, also underscored the great differences between the two Koreas, divided into hostile ideological camps since the end of World War II.

Burma threatens to act against militant monks

RANGOON, Burma (AP) — Burma's military rulers have sentenced two dissidents to seven years in jail and warned Buddhist monks to end their boycott of religious ceremonies for soldiers by Saturday.

A government spokesman told a news conference Friday that a military tribunal had sentenced two members of the National League for Democracy the previous day.

The National League overwhelmingly won a general election on May 27, but the military government has barred it from office and arrested most of its leaders.

The two party members, Ohn Kyauing and Thein Tan, were arrested on Sept. 6 and accused of inciting unrest in the central city of Mandalay. Ohn Kyauing was a Central Committee member for the League in Mandalay and Thein Tan was a party organizer.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Gen. Saw Maung warned monks in Mandalay, in the Monya region to the west, and in the national capital, Rangoon, to end a boycott of ceremonies for the military they began after troops

broke up an anti-government demonstration in Mandalay on Aug. 8.

During the demonstration, troops killed four people, including two monks.

During a meeting with 19 senior monks in Rangoon, Saw Maung said the boycott must end by Saturday. The meeting was broadcast on state radio and television.

"I have tolerated as much as I can... I have decided to take measures that should be taken," Saw Maung said, according to a transcript of the radio broadcast.

About 85 per cent of Burma's population of 40 million are Buddhist and about 200,000 monks live in monasteries around the country. Monks play an important role in the celebrations and rites of the people.

On Sept. 6, monks in Mandalay announced their refusal to officiate ceremonies for soldiers and their families. The city, about 560 kilometres north of Rangoon, has been the centre of recent anti-government protests.

A Western diplomat in Rangoon, contacted from Bangkok, called the monks' action "the equivalent of excommunication."

Panama police launch hunt for coup suspects

PANAMA (R) — Panamanian police launched a massive hunt in northern Panama for suspects believed to have been behind an apparent plot to topple the U.S.-backed government of President Guillermo Endara, authorities said.

The government announced earlier Thursday that it had "frustrated" the apparent coup attempt and had arrested four police officials.

According to a statement from the president's office, the revolt was to start with an attempt to take over the northern province of Chiriqui.

"We have a list of some 30 collaborators and we are searching for them," Chiriqui Technical Judicial Police (PTJ) detective Roberto Gonzalez told Reuters in a telephone interview.

He said some 1,200 police were involved in the hunt, including many officers drafted to the northern province from the capital. A police official in the capital said arrests were imminent.

"In the next few hours, there

are going to be more arrests," detective Carlos Nunez, of Panama City's PTJ told Reuters. The PTJ is Panama's chief crime-fighting force.

Earlier Thursday, Endara's office issued a statement saying Chiriqui's Deputy Chief of Police Carlos Ivan Moreno had confessed to taking part in the plot, ordering his men to launch two recent bomb attacks against government electricity plants in Chiriqui.

The statement said Moreno had named the mastermind of the plot as former national police chief Eduardo Herrera, who was ousted from his post in August.

The four arrested included Moreno, Herrera's brother Francisco — also police captain — and two lower-ranking police officers, the attorney general's office said.

Gonzalez said the 30 other suspects included some policemen who were former members of the Panamanian Defence Force (PDF) loyal to deposed Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega.

U.K. firm, crew acquitted of ferry disaster charges

LONDON (R) — A judge Friday cleared British shipping company P and O European Ferries Limited of manslaughter charges arising from a 1987 capsizing of a ferry in the Channel in which 193 people died.

The judge also acquitted seven individual P and O former employees who were on trial. They included the captain of the ferry Herald of Free Enterprise, other crew members and company officials.

It was only the second time in British legal history that a company had faced charges of manslaughter.

The ferry capsized as it left the Belgian port of Zeebrugge on March 6, 1987.

The judge directed that charges against the company and five individuals be dropped. Moments later the prosecutor said it would not be in the public interests to proceed against the other two men.

The judge then directed the jury to bring in not guilty verdicts on the two.

The Herald of Free Enterprise took just two minutes to keel over after it had left the port, when water flooded into the hold through open bow doors, the court heard.

It was the worst disaster in the channel since World War II. Almost all the dead were British.

The trial came to a dramatic halt after 27 days with the prosecution abruptly winding up its case after calling only 66 of a total of 138 witnesses.

It followed a rare warning from the judge Thursday in the absence of the jury that the prosecution was in his view unable to prove its case.

The judge told the jury Friday: "It is my judgment if this case was to proceed I can see no possibility as a matter of law that I could do other than withdraw it from the jury on the basis that evidence already called is such that you, properly directed, could not properly convict the company and the five most senior defendants."

P and O chief marine superintendent Jeffrey Develin, deputy chief marine superintendent John Alcinder, technical director Wallace Ayres, senior master John Kirby and the captain of the Herald, David Lewry, had all denied manslaughter.

So had the two remaining defendants, chief officer Leslie Sabel and assistant bosun Mark Stanley.

Stallone protected from fan

LOS ANGELES (R) — Film star Sylvester Stallone, who beat heavyweight boxing champions Rocky and won wars single-handed as Rambo, was given court protection — from a woman fan. The woman, Elife Wade, was alleged in court documents to have written more than 200 letters and postcards to the actor in the past 20 months, telling him "I can't wait to get my paws on you." Wade was ordered by Superior Court Judge Irving Shimer to keep at least 300 metres from Stallone and from his beach home in the film star colony of Malibu, and not to telephone or write to him for at least the next three years. "I am extremely concerned that Ms. Wade may be a great danger and threat to me," Stallone wrote in a letter to the court. "The letters and cards... contain numerous references to 'violence.' Wade was quoted as telling Stallone in one letter submitted to the court: 'I'll tie you up if you try to escape from me.' Stallone is the latest in a line of stars, including Michael J. Fox, Michael Landon, singer Anne Murray, and television talk show host David Letterman, who have been stalked by obsessed fans.

U.S. Capitol dome springs a leak

WASHINGTON (AP) — Already besieged by a storm of criticism for its budget failures, Congress was hit with a real storm Thursday. Driving winds and rain caused a massive leak in the Capital Dome and Shredded flags flying atop the congressional office buildings. Water poured onto the floor of the rotunda from the balconies above. Statues of Abraham Lincoln and others were draped with plastic sheeting to protect them from the cascade. Workers said the strong winds had driven rain past drains on the newly restored dome and into the Building.

Wine brawl wrecks wedding

MILFORD, Connecticut (AP) — A dispute over three cases of leftover wine at a wedding reception erupted into a brawl, which ended with the arrest of the bride's father and of members of the wedding party. Michael Calise, whose daughter was married, had paid for the wine and wanted to take it home when the reception ended. But Rolando Trovini, owner of the reception hall, said state liquor law prohibits removing liquor from the hall. "We ended up being assaulted," Calise said. "Physically and psychologically battered. They descended on us so quickly — it was the most astounding thing that's ever happened to me." Trovini called police, who arrested Calise, 50, on charges of interfering with police, breach of peace and refusing to be fingerprinted. His daughter, Maria, 27, a bridesmaid, and his son, Frank, 23, also were arrested for interfering with police. Two other people also were arrested. Trovini, owner of Sante's Manor, told police the wedding party caused \$6,000 worth of damage. "They pay for six hours of wedding — it doesn't mean they can take the place with them," he said. "There was a lot of chaos here."

Judge stops Gucci grandson from using name of family firm

LONDON (R) — A grandson of the founder of the chic leatherware house Gucci was banned from using the Gucci name on his products in Britain by a judge who said he told lies in court. Sir Nicolas Browne-Wilkinson granted the Italian-based Gucci Company an injunction stopping Paolo Gucci, 59, using the name on a planned range of ties, jewelry, pottery and furs for copyright reasons. The judge said the evidence he had seen pointed to "a persistent attempt to use the Gucci name and goodwill to the maximum extent he could get away with." "He seemed not duly concerned to be an accurate witness at the best of times and on occasions he told me deliberate lies," Browne-Wilkinson said. Britain is one of several countries where Paolo Gucci has fought in the courts to use the Gucci trademark for his own products. He lost in Italy, France, Belgium, Switzerland, but won in the United States, where he must nevertheless observe strict conditions. The judge said Paolo left the original Gucci firm in 1982 after arguments with his father Aldo. The firm, which was founded by Paolo's grandfather Guccio in 1904, is now run by his cousin Maurizio who owns half the shares.